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A HANDBOOK OF GASTRONOMY



LES SENS

A HANDBOOK
OF
GASTRONOMY

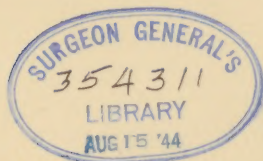
(Physiologie du Goût)

BY
JEAN ANTHELME BRILLAT-SAVARIN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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From engravings, in the first French edition, by Bertall (Charles Albert d'Arnoix).

INTRODUCTION

FOR a long time I wished to say something about Brillat-Savarin. This figure, smiling rather than laughing, this well-lined paunch, this stylish mind and stomach, tempted me. The opportunity could not be better, and I profit by it.

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, or Brillat de Savarin (for he signs himself thus in his *Essay on Duels*), was born at Belley, in the Ain, on the 1st of April, 1755, and died at Paris, on the 2d of February, 1826. He, therefore, lived seventy-one years. He had time enough wherein to eat. Moreover, nature had predestined him for this important function. She gave him a lofty figure, robust health, and an inexhaustible flow of good humour. Without ambition, inclined to study, and sufficiently rich, he seemed to lead the peaceable and happy life of a country lawyer, who has a knife and fork laid for him in all decent country houses. Until he was thirty-four years old, people saw him often going to and fro in the fertile country of Bugey, sometimes sitting down in well-provisioned inns, where strings of poultry were roasting, sometimes opposite to some jovial curé, sometimes coping with noisy huntsmen. From that time, there remained in his memory those precious receipts that he was to leave to posterity—the fondue, the omelette with tunny, the stuffed pheasant, etc.

The Revolution came and cut short all these joyous parties. His fellow-citizens, who had learnt to appreciate his good qualities, sent him to the Constituent Assembly. There Brillat-Savarin made not a worse figure than any

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other; but he did not seem prepared for the great work that was going on. On returning to his department, he was named president of the civil tribunal. Nothing would serve but that he should occupy some position. What did they expect of him? I do not know. The year 1793 found him Mayor of Belley. He thought this work too heavy for his shoulders, and as Switzerland was only a few steps off, he went to seek there a refuge against a movement that he found it impossible to direct or to moderate. I do not know how far we have to believe in the persecutions which were said to have been directed against him; government had to occupy itself with many other things at that time. Certain it is, Brillat-Savarin went to the United States, where the repose he enjoyed during two years profited to his beloved studies. The pages which he has written about his stay in America are his best; among them are sketches of rustic glades and interiors, painted with a lightness and a charm that Chateaubriand himself might have envied.

When he returned to France, the Directory was in full swing. Thrown on a sea of adventures, Brillat-Savarin, who had been deprived of his property at Bugey, accepted a post of secretary on the staff of the armies of the Republic in Germany. Afterwards he was sent as commissary of the Government in the Department of Seine-et-Oise. Finally, after the 18th Brumaire, at which he was present, with a resignation that I can scarcely appreciate, the Senate housed him for life, and made him a counsellor in the Court of Cassation.

It was in this haven that he passed the twenty-five last years of his life, scarcely troubled by the overthrow of the Hundred Days, maintained by all governments, which philosophically he refrained from disputing. It was on

INTRODUCTION

this magisterial seat that he elaborated his *Handbook of Gastronomy*, the work and epitome of his whole life.

We find ourselves here in the presence of a well-known book that can only be mentioned with praise; of a book conceived soundly, proceeding by clever deductions, written in the most natural style in the world, which does not exclude liveliness and an originality peculiar to the temperament of its author. I only find a little stiffness here and there in the arrangement, which is even a mark of reverence to the reader, and a proof that the author seeks to please him by cutting up the pieces in small and attractive mouthfuls. Where Brillat-Savarin excels most is in anecdote: he possesses its real secret, elegance, and tone.

He has gained and gains many men every day to gastronomy solely by the perfect wisdom of his precepts and by his good and well-balanced common sense. Coming after Grimod de la Reynière, he united in a body of doctrine the teaching and the scattered information that he had gathered from him. He fixed them for ever. There was between Grimod de la Reynière and Brillat-Savarin the difference that there is between a great eater and a delicate eater.¹

¹ We must make everything enter into a biography, even a discordant note, on the condition that it comes from an authority. Now, this title of "delicate eater" has been denied to Brillat-Savarin. And by whom? By the Marquis de Cussy, to whom no one will deny authority. I am quite amused in transcribing the following lines from his *Art Culinaire*: "Brillat-Savarin ate copiously and ill; he chose little, talked dully, had no vivacity in his looks, and was absorbed at the end of a repast." In other respects, the Marquis de Cussy was willing to praise his rival. At the beginning of the Observations that he has left on the *Handbook of Gastronomy*, he said: "To perceive some slight spots on the sun does not prevent us from recognising the brilliancy of its rays." This is right; but as a guest he is not less cruelly, and, I fear, unjustly attacked. Brillat-Savarin was like the rest of the world — he had his good and his bad days.

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Grimod de la Reynière was a Rabelaisian, a perpetual starveling, with a number of preferences, nevertheless, and a man who could not be prevented from casting a tender regard on the junketing at Camacho's wedding. His enthusiasm, which was unbridled, drove him to cry out somewhere, "I would eat my own father with such a sauce." And he would have done it. Brillat-Savarin does not go so far. He would never have eaten anybody with any sauce whatever.

The principal merit of Grimod de la Reynière, and that one which endows him with sovereign claims to our gratitude, is that of having been the historian of cookery. His eight years of the *Almanack of Gourmands* represent eight years of contest. He has, as all journalists have, a good many inevitable faults, compliances, injustices, and careless judgments, but one cannot deny him ardour, devotion, and that faith which raises pie-crusts. We may say of him that he kept going the kitchen-stoves, after having saved them, perhaps, during the great shipwreck of the Revolution. At all events, he is the connecting link that unites the past to the future.

Brillat-Savarin is more especially a legislator. In him there is something of Boileau. Yet he warms up now and then. His saying, "And you will see marvels," has become celebrated. The *Handbook of Gastronomy* has had many editions, but not in quick succession: its success was made slowly and surely. Nowadays it is what is called a library book.

I have questioned many people who knew Brillat-Savarin, especially in the society of the Récamiers, of whom he was a relative. Their opinion was unanimous about him; he was amiable, delicate, highly fashionable.

INTRODUCTION

His hobbies were connected with his favourite passion, and it is thus that he upset the feelings of all his colleagues in the Court of Cassation by the smell of the game that he carried in his pockets to get high. A frequenter of the Café Lemblin, he came there with a dog who became legendary. He lived in the Rue des Filles-Saint-Thomas. His widow lived long after him. M. Lefeuvre affirms that she was still living in 1859, in the Rue Vivienne.

I have read nearly all that has been written about Brillat-Savarin. Can it be believed? The article about him in the *Biographie Universelle* is by Balzac, one of the least eating men that has ever existed in the literary world, a man who did not spend more time at table than Napoleon. But gastronomy is made up above all of lost time. We do not "take a snack" in the kingdom of Comus. The article of Balzac is none the less well composed, as all that has come from the pen of this writer, who has carried so far his gifts of intuition and assimilation.¹

Some other *littérateurs*, Alphonse Karr, Eugène Barette, etc., have also published notices on Brillat-Savarin, but I can see nothing characteristic in any of them.

The *Physiologie du Goût* has had an imitator or rather a continuer in the anonymous author of a book which appeared in 1839, under the title, *Neophysiology of Taste, or General Dictionary of French Cookery, Ancient and Modern* etc., etc., dedicated to the author of the *Memoirs of the Marchioness of Créquy* (Paris: one large octavo volume of 635 pages). It is a very excellent repertory, very practical, filled with amusing digressions, and which de-

¹ Balzac owed this compliment to Brillat-Savarin, for it is his *Physiologie du Goût* that inspired him with his *Physiology of Marriage*. He introduces also "Meditations" and "Aphorisms," and borrows the professorial accent.

INTRODUCTION

serves to be better known. Its author, who is assuredly a born gastronomer, teases often on several points his illustrious predecessor, which does not prevent him from rendering justice to his high competence. From indications almost certain, and especially from the dedication, I believe that I am right in attributing the *Neophysiology of Taste* to the Count de Courchamps. This was also the opinion of Roger de Beauvoir.

Has gastronomy progressed since the time of Brillat-Savarin? This is a question that I hear often put, and to which I would gladly reply in the affirmative; but I look in vain for the tables that are praised or the hosts that are renowned. Where are the great cooks? What names have we now to oppose to those of Carême and Robert?

Yet, nevertheless, we eat a great deal; restaurants are multiplied to infinity. What has cookery gained? I ought rather to say what it has lost. Nearly all the roasts are now done in the oven. An abomination!

An old and worthy cook, finding himself without resources, went out one morning concealing as best he could under his overcoat something long and slender wrapped in paper. He turned towards the pawnshop of the Rue des Blancs-Manteaux, the central dépôt and mother-house of the French *monts de piété*. There he went before one of the windows and put his parcel before the clerk.

"What is this?" said the man.

"It is Ernestine, the faithful companion of all my life."

And in pronouncing these words, the cook wiped away a big tear.

"Open the parcel," said the clerk.

The cook did so; and exhibited a spit, sharp and shining.

"The queen of spits!" he murmured.

INTRODUCTION

"We don't lend anything on that here," replied the clerk.

"Did you speak?"

"I told you that we never take spits in pawn."

"Unless they are set with diamonds," said another facetious clerk.

The cook remained immoveable, without understanding, while everybody laughed around him.

"Now, be off," said the employé; "you are in the way."

"What do you want me to do with it?" sighed the poor man; "they don't cook more anywhere!"

"Pack up and hook it, I tell you."

"O Ernestine! what will become of us?"

After this cry, which would have melted the heart of a wild beast, but which did not move the clerks of the pawnshop, the unhappy man picked up his spit, which he did not take the trouble to wrap up, and ran out with quick steps. In the road everybody turned to look at this weeping man, brandishing this rod of iron.

The solicitude of the practitioners of the present time — and there are many clever ones — is entirely devoted to the ornamental matters of the kitchen, to decorations, to the service of the table. They attend to the "aspics," "chartreuses," or any "set piece"; they merely work for show.

A cook is now only an impresario of a theatre, whose whole mind is exclusively engrossed with decorations and costumes. Therefore, why not let Chéret paint meals for us? In all stages, and among all classes of society, I encounter this invading mania of "keeping up appearances." Shall I speak of official cookery, of ministerial dinners, where a band plays at intervals; a theatrical invention,

INTRODUCTION

injurious to the guests, and which destroys conversation. These are not the dinners to which people go to eat. There, especially, the cook is more proud of a Chinese kiosk on a rock in coloured and spun sugar, which no person dare touch, than of a carp *à la Chambord* treated in a masterly way. Since the days of Cambacérès, official cookery has ceased to exist.

Another cause of the stationary state of gastronomy is, that all dinners are like **each other**. That which you ate yesterday in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, you will eat to-morrow in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. At the end of the week you recognise that you have merely changed your knife and fork; the chief dishes of the *menu* have always been the same; a turbot with two different sauces, a "filet *à la royale*," fowls "*à la Périgueux*," a York ham, and a dish of crayfish. This poverty of imagination, this absence of research, are unworthy of a country such as ours.

We must act. But how? Formerly there were groups, series of intelligent and special men, who met to eat. These groups were a perpetual stimulant for the cooks; they have disappeared and are not now replaced; but they may be. Without looking too far, we find, principally amongst certain doctors, a few sparks of the sacred fire. The Renaissance may also come from the clubs, which only have to show themselves more imperious in the matter of their dinners. One of the last good "chefs" of the Jockey Club of Paris was Jules Gouffé, whose style was pretty and easy, without too much show.

Good female cooks have become more rare than the phoenix, and are worth their weight in gold. Upon the whole, the situation should be more cheerful. French gastronomy lives on its past, and has lost nothing of its pres-

INTRODUCTION

tige in the eyes of the stranger; but this is not enough. The pause is too marked. May the perusal of Brillat-Savarin excite ambitions and determine vocations.¹

CHARLES MONSELET

PARIS, 30th November, 1879.

¹ I add a last note to perpetuate one of my surprises. Neither Brillat-Savarin, nor Grimod de la Reynière, nor even the Marquis of Cussy, have given a great importance to wine. It seems that they only considered it as a digestive element. Provided that it was good, they did not ask for more; and they did not make any distinctions between our innumerable brands of Burgundies and of clarets. Was the exquisite sense of this important part of taste entirely wanting to them? In this respect, at least, we are superior to them.



APHORISMS OF THE PROFESSOR

TO SERVE AS PROLEGOMENA TO HIS WORK, AND AS AN
ETERNAL BASIS TO SCIENCE

I

THE world would have been merely nothing except for life. All that lives, feeds.

II

Animals feed, man eats; wise men alone know how to eat.

III

The destiny of nations depends on the manner wherein they take their food.

IV

Tell me what thou eatest, and I will tell thee what thou art.

V

The Creator, though condemning man to eat to live, invites him to do so by appetite, and rewards him by enjoyment.

VI

Good living is an act of our judgment by which we grant a preference to those things which are agreeable to the taste above those that have not that quality.

APHORISMS OF THE PROFESSOR

VII

The joys of the table belong equally to all ages, conditions, countries, and times; they mix with all other pleasures, and remain the last to console us for their loss.

VIII

The table is the sole locality where no one during the first hour feels himself tired.

IX

The discovery of a new dish is more beneficial to humanity than the discovery of a new star.

X

The dyspeptic man and the drunkard are incapable of either eating or drinking.

XI

The order of food is from the most solid to the most light.

XII

The order of drink is from the mildest to the most heady and the most scented.

XIII

To say that we should not mix our liquors is a heresy. The tongue becomes saturated, and after the third glass, the finest wine only gives an obtuse sensation.

XIV

Dessert without cheese, is like a pretty girl with only one eye.

APHORISMS OF THE PROFESSOR

XV

A cook may be educated, but a "roast cook" must be born such.

XVI

The most indispensable quality in the cook is punctuality, and such ought to be the duty of the guests.

XVII

To wait too long for a late guest denotes a lack of consideration to all those who are present.

XVIII

He who receives guests, and pays no personal care to the repast offered them, is not worthy to have friends.

XIX

The hostess should always assure herself that the coffee is good, and the host that the *liqueurs* are of the finest quality.

XX

To invite any one, implies that we charge ourselves with his happiness all the time that he is under our roof.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND A FRIEND

(After the first compliments)

FRIEND

THIS morning, at breakfast, my wife and I decreed in our wisdom that you should print, as early as possible, your "Gastronomic Meditations."

AUTHOR

What women will, God wills. This is, in five words, the whole Parisian charter. But I do not belong to that parish, and a bachelor . . .

FRIEND

Good Heavens! Bachelors are as much broken in as the rest, and often to our great prejudice. But here celibacy will not help you, for my wife pretends that she has a right to command, because it was at her place in the country that you wrote your first pages.

AUTHOR

You know, dear doctor, my deference to ladies; you have more than once praised my submission to their orders; you were also amongst those who said that I should make an excellent husband, and nevertheless I cannot print.

FRIEND

Why?

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DIALOGUE

AUTHOR

Because, devoted by the nature of my profession to serious studies, I fear that those who merely know my book by the title-page will imagine that I only occupy myself with insignificant things.

FRIEND

A panic terror! Thirty-six years of work, public and continuous, have established for you a contrary reputation. Besides, my wife and I think that all the world will be glad to read you.

AUTHOR

Really?

FRIEND

Educated men will read you, to divine and learn that which you have only sketched out.

AUTHOR

That may well be.

FRIEND

Women will read you, as they will see clearly that . . .

AUTHOR

Dear friend, I am old; I have acquired wisdom. *Miserere mei.*

FRIEND

Gourmands will read you, inasmuch as you do them justice, and give to them the exact rank they merit in Society.

(xxxii)

DIALOGUE

AUTHOR

Now you are right. Poor gourmands; I cannot imagine they have been so long misunderstood. I have for them a fatherly love. They are so smart, and their eyes are so bright.

FRIEND

Moreover, have you not often said that your work would supply a lack in every library?

AUTHOR

I have said so; the fact is true, and I will be hanged rather than deny a letter of it.

FRIEND

But you speak as a man already convinced, and you will come with me to the . . .

AUTHOR

Oh no! If the profession of author has its pleasures, it has also its thorns, and I leave all this to my heirs.

FRIEND

But you disinherit your friends, your acquaintances, and your contemporaries. Have you the courage to act thus?

AUTHOR

My heirs! my heirs! I have heard it said that ghosts are singularly flattered by the praise of the living, and this is a sort of blessing I wish to reserve for myself in another world.

DIALOGUE

FRIEND

But are you certain that these praises will all go to the right address? Are you equally certain of the punctuality of your heirs?

AUTHOR

I have no reason to think that they will neglect a duty in consideration of which I will excuse them from so many others.

FRIEND

Will or can they have for your production the paternal love, and the author's care, without which a work is always given to the public with an awkward air?

AUTHOR

My manuscript will be corrected, neatly copied, quite prepared for the press; the printing is all that will have to be done.

FRIEND

And the chapter of accidents! Alas! similar unlucky circumstances have occasioned the loss of so many celebrated works, like that of the famous Lecat on the state of the soul during sleep, the labour of his whole life.

AUTHOR

That was, no doubt, a great loss; but I am very far from aspiring to such regrets.

FRIEND

Believe me, your heirs will have enough to do to arrange with the Church, with law, medicine, and themselves, so

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that the time, if not the will, must fail them to devote themselves to the various cares which precede, accompany, and follow the issue of a work, however little the size may be.

AUTHOR

But the title, the subject, the good-natured friends?

FRIEND

The very word "gastronomy" makes every one prick up his ears. The subject is fashionable, and good-natured friends are as much gourmands as any one else. This should quiet you. Besides, do you not know that the gravest people have sometimes written light works: the President Montesquieu, for example? ¹

AUTHOR

Yes, that is quite true. He has written the Temple of Gnidos, and it may be maintained that there is more real usefulness in thinking of what is at the same time a necessity, a pleasure, and an everyday occupation, than in saying that there were, more than two thousand years ago, a couple of dirty brats, one of whom ran through the bushes of Greece after the other, who had no desire to run away.

FRIEND

You surrender, then?

AUTHOR

I? Not at all; I have merely betrayed myself as an author. And this reminds me of a scene in English comedy that

¹ M. de Montucla, known by a very good history of mathematics, wrote a dictionary of gastronomic geography; he showed me some parts

DIALOGUE

was very amusing; it is, I think, in a play which is called the *Natural Daughter*. You shall judge for yourself.¹

It is about the Quakers, and you know that those who are attached to this sect *thee* and *thou* the whole world, dress simply, never go to war, take no oaths, act deliberately, and, above all, never get in a rage.

The hero of the piece is a young and handsome Quaker, who appears on the stage in a brown coat, broad-brimmed hat, and combed-down hair. This does not prevent him from falling in love.

A fool, who is his rival, emboldened by his outward appearance, and his supposed hidden feelings, ridicules and annoys him so much, that the young man, warming up little by little, falls into a rage, and thrashes with a master-hand the impertinent person who provokes him. The punishment executed, he at once resumes his habitual aspect, collects himself, and says in an afflicted tone, "Alas! the flesh is too mighty for the spirit."

I act in the same manner; and after a very pardonable emotion, I fall back on my first opinion.

FRIEND

This is no longer possible. You have already, as you admit, betrayed yourself. I have captured you, and I take you to my bookseller. I will tell you that there is more than one person who has noised abroad your secret.

of it whilst I was at Versailles. It is said that M. Berriat-Saint-Prix, who was a good consulting lawyer, has written a novel in many volumes.

¹ The reader must have perceived that my friend lets himself be "thou'd" (*tutoyer*) without his doing the same to me. This is because my age is to his like that of a father to a son, and that although he has become a man of importance in every respect, he would grieve if I spoke to him in another way.

DIALOGUE

AUTHOR

Do not run the risk, for in my book I'll speak of you, and who knows what I may say?

FRIEND

What can you say? Do not imagine that you can frighten me.

AUTHOR

I shall not say that our common locality ¹ is pleased with having given you birth, that at twenty-four years you already published an elementary work which since then has become classical; that your deserved reputation already inspires confidence in you; that your outward appearance soothes your patients. Your skill revives invalids; your dexterity surprises them; your sensibility consoles them. Every one knows this; but I will reveal to all Paris — (*rising*) — to all France — (*bridling up*) — to the entire universe, the only fault I know in you.

FRIEND (*in a serious tone*)

And what is that fault, if you please?

AUTHOR

An habitual fault of which all my exhortations have not been able to correct you.

¹ Belley, the capital of Bugey, a charming country, where we find lofty mountains, hills, rivers, limpid brooks, cascades, cataracts, abysses, a real English garden of a hundred square leagues, where before the Revolution the *tiers état* were able to put a veto on the acts of the two other orders by the constitution of the country.

DIALOGUE

FRIEND (*frightened*)

Speak out; it is too much to keep me in torture.

AUTHOR

You eat too fast.¹

*(Here the friend takes his hat, and goes out smiling,
thinking that he has made a convert.)*

¹ Historical.

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THE doctor whom I have introduced into the dialogue which precedes is not a fantastic being, as the Chloris of former days, but a handsome doctor quite alive. Those who know me will divine that I speak of Dr. Richerand.

Thinking of him, I was led back to those who were before his time; and I saw with pride that my *arrondissement* of Belley, in the Department of the Ain, my native place, had for a long time the honour of giving to the world doctors of the highest distinction, and I could not resist the inducement of erecting a modest monument to them in a short notice.

In the days of the Regency, Drs. Genin and Civoet were practitioners of the first class, and brought back to their country a wealth honourably acquired. The first was entirely Hippocratic, and proceeded in form; the second, amongst whose patients were many fair ladies, was more gentle and more accommodating: *res novas molientem*, as Tacitus expresses it.

Towards 1750, Dr. La Chapelle distinguished himself in the perilous career of a military surgeon. We have several good works from his pen, and we owe to him the treatment of inflammation on the chest by fresh butter, a method which cures like a spell when it is used in the first thirty-six hours of the attack.

Towards 1760, Dr. Dubois obtained the greatest success in the treatment of low spirits, which then was a fashionable malady, and quite as common as the ailments of the

BIOGRAPHY

nerves which have replaced it. The popularity which he obtained was so much the more remarkable, as he was far from being a handsome man.

Unhappily he arrived too early at an independent fortune, and fell into a career of laziness, contenting himself with being a good story-teller and an amiable companion. He was of a robust constitution, and lived more than eighty-eight years, in spite of dinners, or perhaps thanks to the dinners of the old and the new régime.¹

At the end of the reign of Louis XV, Dr. Coste, a native of Châtillon, came to Paris. He was bearer of a letter of Voltaire for the Duke of Choiseul, whose goodwill he had the good fortune to gain during his first visit.

Protected by this nobleman and by the Duchess of Grammont, his sister, young Coste made rapid progress; and after a few years Paris commenced to count him among the most hopeful doctors.

The same protection which had brought him out tore him away from this tranquil and fruitful career to place him at the head of the medical department of the army that France sent to America to help the United States, which were fighting for their independence. After having fulfilled his mission, Dr. Coste returned to France, passed the unfortunate period of 1793 almost without being noticed, and was elected Mayor of Versailles, where even now the memory of his active, mild, and fatherly government is still preserved.

¹ I smiled when I wrote this article, for it reminded me of a great academician, whose eulogy had to be delivered by Fontenelle. The defunct only knew how to play at every game, and, nevertheless, the perpetual secretary had the talent of devising a very fair panegyric of the usual length. (See further, the Meditation on the "Pleasures of the Table," where the doctor is in active employment.)

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Soon the Directory recalled him to the administration of military medicine. Bonaparte named him one of the three general inspectors of the Army Medical Service, and the doctor was constantly the friend, the protector, and the father of those young men who were destined to this career. Finally, he was named doctor of the Royal Hospital of the Invalides, and discharged those duties until his death.

Such long services could not remain without recompense by the Government of the Bourbons; and Louis XVIII did an act of justice in conferring on Dr. Coste the Order of St. Michael.

Dr. Coste died some years ago, leaving a venerated memory, a fortune entirely of a philosophical extent, and an only daughter, the wife of M. Delalot, who has distinguished himself in the Chamber of Deputies by his lively and deep eloquence, which did not prevent his failure.

One day when we dined with M. Favre, the clergyman at St. Laurent, our townsman, Dr. Coste told me of the serious quarrel he had had that very day with the Comte de Cessac, then Minister and Director of the War Department, on the subject of an economy that the latter wished to propose in order to please Napoleon. This economy consisted in subtracting from the sick soldiers half of their portion of toast and water, and washing the lint which was taken away from their wounds to use it a second or a third time.

The doctor protested with violence against a plan that he considered abominable, and he was so full of his subject that he fell into a rage, as if the object of his wrath had been still present.

I do not know if the count was really converted, and if he left his plan in his portfolio, but what is certain is, that

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the sick soldiers were ever after permitted to drink as much as they liked, and that all lint that had been used was thrown away.

Towards 1780, Dr. Bordier, born in the environs of Ambérieux, came to practise medicine in Paris. His practice was gentle, his system expectant, and his diagnosis certain.

He was named Professor in the Faculty of Medicine. His style was simple, but his lessons were fatherly and fruitful. Honours crowded on him unsought, and he was named physician to the Empress Marie-Louise. But he did not enjoy this place very long; the empire fell to pieces, and the doctor himself was carried away by a disease of the leg, against which he had fought all his life.

Dr. Bordier was of a tranquil humour, a benevolent character, and thoroughly trustworthy.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century Dr. Bichat appeared; Bichat, of whom all the writings bear the impress of genius, who employed his life in works made to advance science, who united with the patience of sluggish minds outbursts of enthusiasm, and who, dying in his thirtieth year, merited that public honours should be given to his memory.

Later, there came Dr. Montègre, who introduced into clinics a philosophical spirit. He edited with skill the *Journal of Health*, and died at the age of forty in the West Indies, where he had gone in order to complete the treatises which he had projected on the yellow fever and the black vomit.

At the present time (1825) Dr. Richerand stands on the highest ladder of operative medicine, and his *Elements of Physiology* have been translated in all languages.

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Named when young a Professor of the Faculty of Paris, he is invested with the most august confidence. No one has a word more consoling, a hand more kind, or a sharper knife.

Dr. Récamier, a professor in the same faculty, sits at the side of his compatriot.

As useful as lucky a practitioner, he preserves notes of all the maladies of his patients, and is able at each new invasion to exhibit a table of all the variations of their sanitary state. Dr. Récamier does not consider any case hopeless, and unlooked-for success has often crowned his efforts.

The present being thus certain, the future prepares itself, inasmuch as under the wings of these powerful professors young men of the same country are being trained, who promise to imitate such honourable examples.

Now Drs. Janin and Manjot drive along Paris. Dr. Manjot (Rue du Bac, No. 39) devotes himself principally to maladies of children. His ideas are happy, and he ought soon to communicate them to the public.

I hope that every well brought up reader will pardon this digression of an old man who resides thirty-five years in Paris, but who has not forgotten either his country or his compatriots. It costs me already much to pass *sub silentio* so many doctors whose remembrance subsists venerated in their native country, and who, although they have not had the advantage of shining on a grand stage, are not less than the above gifted with science and merit.

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To offer to the public the work that I leave to its kindness, is not a great labour for me. I have merely placed in order materials I had collected long ago. This is an amusing occupation, which I reserved for my old age.

Considering the pleasures of the table from every point of view, I soon saw that something better than a cookery-book might have been made out of the subject, and that a great deal might be said about such essential and constant functions that have a direct influence on health, happiness, and even on business affairs.

When once this dominant idea was seized by me, all the rest ran naturally; I looked around me, took notes, and often, in the middle of the most sumptuous festivals, I should have felt bored but for the pleasure of looking at the guests.

To fulfil the task I proposed to myself, it was necessary to be a physician, a chemist, a physiologist, and even more or less of a classical scholar. But I pursued these studies without the slightest pretension to be an author; I was urged on by a praiseworthy curiosity; by the fear of lagging behind my century, and by the desire of being able to talk without disadvantage with learned men, in whose company I always had a desire to be.

I am especially an amateur physician; and this has become to me almost a mania. I count amongst my brightest days the one when I went in by the professors' door, and with them, to the prize thesis of Dr. Cloquet. I had the pleasure of hearing a murmur of curiosity run through the amphitheatre,

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each student asking his neighbour who the distinguished foreign professor was who honoured the company with his presence. There is also another day of which the remembrance is, I think, as dear to me; it is the day when I presented to the Administrative Council of the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry the irrorator, an instrument of my own invention, which is nothing more than a forcing-pump with which any one can perfume rooms.

I brought in my pocket my well-filled machine; I turned the cock, and there escaped with a hissing sound an odoriferous vapour that, rising even unto the ceiling, fell in little drops on individuals and papers. I saw then with an inexpressible pleasure the most learned heads of the capital bow down under my irroration, and I was thoroughly glad when I observed that the wettest were also the most happy.

Thinking now and then of the grave lucubrations to which the extent of my subject has led me, I have had a sincere fear of being tiresome. For I also have sometimes yawned over the writings of others.

I have done all that is in my power to avoid this reproach; I have only skimmed the various subjects that might lend themselves to it; I have filled my book with anecdotes, of which some are personal to myself; I have left on one side a great number of facts both extraordinary and singular, that a wholesome criticism ought to have rejected; I have roused attention by making plain and popular a certain knowledge which the learned appear to have reserved for themselves. If, in spite of all my efforts, I have not presented to my readers a science easy of digestion, I shall be just as tranquil, very certain that the majority will absolve me on account of my intention.

It may be said that I let my pen run on now and then too fast, and that when I narrate an anecdote, I rather fall into

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garrulity. Is it my fault that I am an old man? Is it my fault that, like Ulysses, I have seen the manners and towns of many nations? Am I, then, worthy of blame for having given a little of my biography?

Finally, the reader should consider that I spare him my political Memoirs, which deserve to be read as well as many others, inasmuch as for thirty-six years past I have been in the best places to see men and events pass. Above all, care should be taken not to assign me a place among compilers; if I had been reduced to this, my pen might have been quiet, and I should not have lived the less happy for it. I say, like Juvenal —

Semper ego auditor tantum! nunquam ne reponam!

and those who are acquainted with the subject will easily see that, equally accustomed to the turmoil of society as to the silence of the study, I have done well in making the most of both these positions.

Finally, I have done much for my own satisfaction. I have given the names of several of my friends, who did not expect it; I have recalled some pleasing recollections; I have settled others that might have escaped me, and as we say in familiar style, I took my coffee. Perhaps one solitary reader, in the category of the wearied, may call out, "I did not want to know if . . ." "What is he thinking about when he says that . . ." etc., etc. But I am certain that all the others will tell him to be silent, and that an imposing majority will receive with pleasure such effusions of a praiseworthy sentiment. It only remains for me to say a word about my style, which, as Buffon says, "is all the man."

Let none think that I come to ask a favour which is never granted to those who want it. I want merely to make a simple

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explanation. I ought to write to perfection; as Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Fénelon, Buffon, and later, Cochin and d'Aguesseau, have been my favourite authors. I know them by heart. But perhaps the gods have ordained it otherwise; and if so, this is the cause of the will of the gods. I know more or less well five living languages. This makes an enormous repertory of words of various patterns.

When I have need of an expression, and I do not find it in the French compartment, I take it from the next one; and thus the reader has to translate me or divine my meaning; — it is his fate.

I could have done otherwise, but I am prevented by a spirit of system, to which I hold in an invincible manner.

I am perfectly convinced that the French language which I use is comparatively poor. What is to be done in this case? To borrow or steal. I do both, inasmuch as these borrowings are not subject to restitution, and as the robbery of words is not punishable by the penal code.

*An idea of my boldness may be imagined, when it is known that I call *volante*, from the Spanish, any man I have ordered to go on an errand, and that I had determined to Frenchify the English word to sip, which signifies to drink in small portions. But I exhumed the French word *siroter*, to which nearly the same meaning is given.*

I know that stern critics will invoke Bossuet, Fénelon, Racine, Boileau, Pascal, and other authors of the century of Louis XIV; I imagine that I hear them make a frightful disturbance.

To which I reply calmly that I am far from denying the merit of these authors, either expressed or implied; but what then? . . . Nothing, except that, if they succeeded in their performance on an inferior instrument, they would have played

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much better on a superior one. We may conceive that Tartini would have played still better on the violin if his bow had equalled that of Baillot in length.

I do belong to the neologists, and even to the romanticists; the latter find out many hidden treasures; the former are like sailors who go about to find afar the provender they want.

The Northern peoples, and especially the English, have over us in this respect an enormous advantage. Genius is there never hampered by expressions; it either creates or borrows them. It is thus that in all subjects which admit depth and energy, our translators only produce pale and colourless copies.

Once I heard at the Institute an amusing discourse on the danger of neology, and on the necessity of keeping our language as it was when the authors of the golden age fixed its limits.

As a chemist, I passed this argument through the retort; but there only remained, "We have done so well that there is no way of doing better or otherwise."

Now, I have lived long enough to know that each generation says the same thing, and that the following generation always laughs at it.

Besides, we must change words when manners and ideas endure continual modifications. If we do things like the ancients, we do not do them in the same way; and there are entire pages in some French books that are intranslatable either into Latin or Greek.

Each language has had its birth, its apogee, and its decline; and none of those which have been famous, from the time of Sesostris to that of Philip Augustus, exists except in monuments. The French language will have the same destiny, and

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in the year 2825, if anybody reads me at all, he will only read me with the aid of a dictionary.

I once had on this subject a discussion of a furious character with the pleasant M. Andrieux, of the French Academy.

I made my attack in good order; I charged vigorously, and I would have succeeded if he had not made a prompt retreat, to which I interposed no obstacle, as I remembered that happily for himself, he was entrusted with a letter in the new Dictionary.

I shall conclude by an important observation, which I have kept until the last.

When I write "I" or "me" in the singular, I am merely gossiping with the reader, who may examine, discuss, doubt, and even laugh; but when I am equipped with the redoubtable "we" I am a professor, and every one must give in.

"I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark."

SHAKESPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*, Act 1, Sc. i.

A HANDBOOK OF GASTRONOMY

MEDITATION I

ON THE SENSES

THE senses are organs by which man communicates with external objects.

NUMBER OF THE SENSES

1. We must count at least *six*.

Sight, which embraces space, and instructs us, by the means of light, of the existence and the colours of the bodies around us.

Hearing, which receives through the medium of the air the motion caused by vibrating or sonorous bodies.

Smell, by means of which we become aware of the odours possessed by substances.

Taste, by which we appreciate everything that has a flavour, or is eatable.

Touch, of which the object is the consistence and the surface of bodies.

Finally, *genesic* or *physical love*, which attracts one sex towards the other, and of which the object is the reproduction of the species.

It is surprising that, almost to the days of Buffon, such an important sense should have been unknown, and should have remained confounded or rather annexed to touch.

Nevertheless, the sensation of which it is the seat has

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nothing in common with that of feeling; it resides in an apparatus as complete as the mouth or the eyes; and although it is singular that each sex has everything needful to experience the sensation, it is nevertheless necessary that the two should be in union to attain the object that Nature has proposed. And if *taste*, which has for its object the preservation of the individual, is undoubtedly a sense, the same title must also be given to the organs destined for the preservation of the species.

We must therefore give to the genestic sense the place in the senses which cannot be refused to it, and we may leave to posterity the task of assigning its particular rank.

ACTION OF THE SENSES

2. If we were permitted, even in imagination, to refer to the first moments of the existence of the human genus, it is also permissible to believe that the first sensations were direct; that is to say, that each one saw dimly, heard vaguely, smelt indiscriminately, ate without taste, and enjoyed himself coarsely.

But the soul being the centre of all these sensations, the special attribute of the human species and the ever active cause of perfectibility, they have been reflected in this soul, compared, and judged, and very soon all the senses have been brought to the aid of each other, for the utility and the happiness of the "percipient *ego*," or, what is the same thing, of the individual.

Thus, touch rectifies the errors of vision; sound, by means of articulate speech, becomes the interpreter of every sentiment; taste is aided by sight and smell; hearing compares sounds, appreciates distances; and the genestic sense has invaded the organs of all the other senses.

ON THE SENSES

The torrent of centuries rolling over the human race has continually brought new perfections, the cause of which, always active, though almost invisible, is found in the demands made by our senses, which always, and in turn, require to be agreeably occupied.

Thus sight has given birth to painting, to sculpture, and to spectacles of every sort;

Sound, to melody, harmony, dancing, and music, with all its branches and its means of execution;

Smell, to the search for, the culture, and the use of perfumes;

Taste, to the production, the selection, and the preparation of all that can serve as food;

Touch, to all the arts, all the capacities, and all the industries;

The genesic sense, to all that can prepare or render beautiful the union of the sexes, and, since Francis I, to romantic love, coquetry, and fashion; above all to coquetry, which, born in France, has only a name in French, and of which the *élite* of nations come every day to take lessons in the capital of the universe.

Strange as this proposition may appear, it is nevertheless easily proved, for in no language used by the ancients can we express ourselves clearly about these three great motives of society as it exists at present.

I wrote on this subject a dialogue that might not have been without attractions, but I suppressed it, to leave to my readers the pleasure of making it each in his own manner. Thus they can employ their mind, and even their learning, during a whole evening.

We have said already that the genesic sense has invaded the organs of all the other senses; it has not less powerfully

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influenced every science, and, regarding it closely, we may see that everything therein most delicate and ingenious is due to the desire, the hope, or the gratitude which is due to the union of the sexes.

The genealogy of sciences, even the most abstract, is such, that they are merely the immediate result of the continuous efforts that we make to gratify our senses.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE SENSES

3. These senses, our favourites, are nevertheless far from being perfect, and I shall not stop to prove this. I shall merely observe that sight, an ethereal sense, and touch, which is at the other end of the scale, have acquired, in time, a very remarkable additional power.

By the means of *spectacles*, the eye escapes, so to say, from the senile obliteration which oppresses the majority of other organs.

The *telescope* has discovered stars formerly unknown and inaccessible to all means of measurement; it has penetrated distances so great that luminous and necessarily immense bodies present themselves to us only as nebulous and almost imperceptible spots.

The *microscope* has made us acquainted with the interior configuration of bodies; it has shown us vegetation and plants of which hitherto we scarcely suspected the existence. Finally, we have seen animals a hundred thousand times smaller than the smallest which are perceived by the naked eye; these little animals nevertheless move, feed, and multiply, which leads us to suppose that they have organs so minute that the imagination cannot conceive it.

On the other side, *mechanics* have multiplied our power; man has executed all that he could imagine, and has re-

ON THE SENSES

moved burdens which nature itself had made inaccessible to his weakness.

With the aid of *implements* and of the *lever*, man has subjugated all nature; he has made it submit to his pleasure, his wants, and his caprices. He has convulsed the surface of the globe, and a feeble biped has become the king of the creation.

Sight and touch, thus increased in their capacity, might have belonged to some species much superior to man, or rather the human species would have been quite something else, if all the senses had been improved in this manner. We must remark, nevertheless, that though touch has acquired a great development as a muscular power, civilisation has done almost nothing for it as a sensitive organ; but we must not despair, remembering that the human species is still very young, and that it is only after a long series of centuries that the senses can enlarge their domain.

For example, it is only for about four centuries that harmony has been discovered, an altogether celestial science, which is to sound exactly what painting is to colour.¹

Certainly, the ancients knew how to sing, accompanied by instruments in unison; but they limited their knowledge to this; they knew neither to decompose sounds, nor to appreciate their relations.

It was only in the fifteenth century that time was

¹ We know that people have maintained the contrary, but this idea is a worthless one. If the ancients had been acquainted with harmony, their writings would have preserved to us some precise notion on this matter, instead of a few obscure phrases, which may mean anything. Besides, we can follow the birth and the progress of harmony in the monuments left to us. We are indebted for it to the Arabs, who gave us the organ, which, producing at the same time several continuous sounds, evoked the first idea of harmony.

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reduced to system, accords made to agree, and that it was used to sustain the voice, and to reinforce the expression of ideas.

That discovery, made so late and nevertheless so natural, has doubled the sense of hearing; it shows that it has two faculties in some sort independent of each other, of which one receives the sounds, and the other marks the resonance.

Some German doctors say that persons sensible of harmony have one sense more than others.

As for those to whom music is but a confused mass of sounds, we may remark that nearly every one of them sings in discord. And we must believe either that amongst them the auditory apparatus is made in such a manner as only to receive short vibrations without undulation, or rather, that the two ears not being of the same diapason, the difference in length and sensibility of their constituent parts makes them only transmit to the brain an obscure and undefined sensation, like two instruments which play neither in the same key nor in the same time, and do not produce any continuous melody.

The last centuries that have passed away have also given to the sphere of taste important extensions; the discovery of sugar and its diverse preparations, alcoholic liquors, ice, vanilla, tea and coffee, have given us flavours whereof the whole world was previously ignorant.

Who knows if touch will not have some day its turn, and if some happy accident will not open to us in this quarter some source of new enjoyments? This is the more probable, as tactile sensibility exists over all the body, and may consequently be excited everywhere.

ON THE SENSES

POWER OF THE TASTE

4. We have seen that physical love has taken possession of all the sciences; it acts in this case with that tyranny that always characterises it.

Taste, that more prudent, more measured faculty, though not less active; taste, we say, has accomplished the same aim with a slowness which ensures its durable success.

Elsewhere we shall consider its progress. We may, however, already observe, that any person who has been present at a sumptuous repast, in a hall decorated with mirrors, paintings, sculpture, flowers, odoriferous with perfumes, adorned with pretty women, filled with the sounds of a delicious harmony, will not need a great mental effort to convince himself that all sciences have been laid under contribution to enhance and enshrine becomingly the pleasures of taste.

OBJECT OF THE ACTION OF THE SENSES

5. Let us now glance in a general manner at the system of our senses that we have taken in their entirety, and we shall see that the Author of Creation had two objects, of which one is the consequence of the other; the preservation of the individual to assure the duration of the species. Such is the destiny of man, considered as a sensitive being; and it is towards this double object that all his actions are directed.

The eye perceives external objects, reveals the marvels by which man is environed, and teaches him that he is a portion of a great whole.

The sense of hearing receives sounds not merely as

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agreeable sensations, but also as warnings of the movement of bodies likely to endanger us.

The sense of touch watches to give us, by the means of pain, information of any immediate hurt.

The hand, as a faithful servant, has not only prepared its defence, assured its steps, but has seized in preference those objects that instinct makes him think fit to repair the losses caused by the maintenance of life.

Smell explores them, as deleterious substances have almost always an unpleasant odour.

Finally, taste decides; the teeth are put in action, the tongue is united to the palate to taste, and soon the stomach commences assimilation.

In this state an unknown languor is felt, objects seem less vivid, the body bends, the eyes are closed, everything disappears, and the senses are in an absolute repose.

At his waking, man sees that nothing has changed around him. Nevertheless, a secret fire ferments in his bosom, and a new organ is developed. He feels that his existence must be shared with some one.

This active, unquiet, and imperious sentiment is common to both sexes. It attracts them, unites them, and when the germ of a new existence is fecundated, each individual may sleep in peace. They have fulfilled the most holy of their duties in assuring the duration of the species.¹

Such are the general and philosophical principles I wish to place before my readers to bring them naturally to the more special examination of the organ of taste.

¹ M. de Buffon paints with all the charms of the most brilliant eloquence the first moments of the existence of Eve. Called to treat nearly the same subject, we have merely drawn a simple sketch. But the readers will know how to complete the colouring.

MEDITATION II

OF TASTE

DEFINITION OF TASTE

6. TASTE is the one of our senses which places us in relation with sapid bodies by means of the sensation they produce in the organ destined to appreciate them.

Taste, which has for its excitants appetite, hunger, and thirst, is the base of many operations whereof the result is that the individual grows, develops, preserves himself, and repairs the losses caused by vital evaporations.

Organised bodies are not all nourished in the same manner. The Author of Creation, equally varied in His methods as certain in His effects, has assigned them various modes of preservation.

Vegetables, the lowest in the scale of living beings, are nourished by roots which, implanted into the native soil, select by the action of a peculiar mechanism different substances which have the property of serving for their growth and their preservation.

Going a little higher in the scale, we find bodies gifted with animal life, but deprived of locomotion. They are produced in a medium that favours their existence, and special organs extract all that is necessary to sustain the portion of life and of duration which has been given to them. They do not seek food, but, on the contrary, it comes to seek them.

Another mode has been fixed for the preservation of animals which move everywhere in the universe, and of

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which man is undoubtedly the most perfect. A particular instinct warns him when to eat; he seeks, he seizes the objects which he imagines possess the property of satisfying his wants; he eats, is restored, and thus during his life goes through the career assigned to him.

Taste itself may be considered under three aspects. In physical man it is the mechanism by means of which he appreciates savours. Considered in moral man, it is the sensation which any organ impressed by a savoury body excites in the common centre.

Finally, considered under its material aspect, taste is the property which a body possesses to impress an organ and to originate sensation.

Taste appears to have two principal uses:—

1°. It invites us, by pleasure, to repair the continual losses which we suffer by the action of life.

2°. It aids us to select, among the various substances which Nature presents to us, those which are alimentary.

In this choice, we shall see hereafter that taste is powerfully aided by the sense of smell; as a general principle, it may be laid down that nutritive substances are repulsive neither to smell nor to taste.

MECHANISM OF TASTE

7. It is not easy to determine exactly wherein the faculty of taste consists. It is more complicated than it appears. Certainly the tongue plays a great part in the mechanism of taste, for, considering it as gifted with rather strong muscular power, it enfolds, turns, presses, and swallows the food.

Further, by means of the more or less numerous papillæ with which it is covered, it is impregnated with sapid and

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soluble particles from those bodies with which it comes in contact; but all this is not sufficient, and many other adjacent parts concur to complete the sensation, namely, the cheeks, the palate, and, above all, the nasal fossæ, whereon physiologists have perhaps not sufficiently insisted.

The cheeks, as well as the maxillary and sublingual glands, form the saliva, equally necessary for mastication and the formation of the nourishing mass. They, as well as the palate, are gifted with a portion of the appreciative faculties; I do not know if even in certain cases the gums do not participate a little in it; and without the odoration which is preserved in the back part of the mouth, the sensation of taste would be obtuse and wholly imperfect.

The persons who have no tongue, or whose tongue has been cut out, possess the sensation of taste very fairly. Many books speak of the first case; the second has been sufficiently explained to me by a wretched man whose tongue the Algerians had cut out for having, with some of his comrades in captivity, formed a project of escaping and running away.

This man, whom I met at Amsterdam, where he gained his living by running errands, had some education, and it was easy to communicate with him in writing.

After having observed that all the fore part of the tongue down to the frænulum had been cut away, I asked him if he still recognised any taste in what he ate, and if the sensation of taste had survived the cruel operation which he had undergone.

He answered, that what was most troublesome to him was the act of swallowing, which was only done with great difficulty; that he had preserved taste pretty fairly; that

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he appreciated, like others, what was little sapid or agreeable, but that anything which was very sour or bitter caused him intolerable pain.

He also told me that cutting away the tongue was common in some African kingdoms; that it was applied especially to those who were thought to have been chiefs of a plot, and that special instruments were used for this operation. I wanted him to describe them, but he exhibited on this topic such a sorrowful disinclination that I did not insist.

I reflected on what he had said, and, carrying my thoughts back to those centuries of ignorance, when the tongues of blasphemers were pierced and cut, I came to the conclusion that these punishments were of African origin, and imported at the return of the Crusaders.

We have seen already that the sensation of taste resides principally in the papillæ of the tongue. But anatomy tells us that every tongue has not the same number of them, and that in some tongues there are three times as many papillæ as in others. This circumstance will explain why of two guests sitting at the same table one should be deliciously affected, whereas the other seems to eat from constraint; it is because the latter has a tongue imperfectly provided with papillæ, and that the empire of taste has also its blind and its deaf people.

SENSATION OF TASTE

8. Five or six different opinions have been broached as to the manner in which the sensation of taste operates; I have also mine, and it is as follows:—

The sensation of taste is a chemical operation, made in the humid way, as we called it formerly; that is to say,

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that it is necessary for the sapid molecules to be dissolved by some fluid to be finally absorbed by the nervous ganglia, papillæ, or suckers which cover the interior of the organ of taste.

This system, new or not, is based on physical proofs that are almost palpable.

Pure water does not cause a sensation of taste, because it does not contain any sapid particle. Dissolve in it a grain of salt, or some drops of vinegar, the sensation will take place.

Other drinks, on the contrary, impress us, because they are nothing else but liquids more or less charged with appreciable particles.

The mouth would be uselessly filled with the divided particles of an insoluble body, for the tongue would experience a sensation of touch alone, and not of taste.

As to solid and tasty bodies, it is necessary that the teeth should divide them, that they should be impregnated with the saliva and other tasting fluids, and that the tongue should press them against the palate to express a juice, which, then sufficiently charged with sapidity, is appreciated by the gustatory papillæ, which deliver to the substance thus triturated the passport it requires to be admitted into the stomach.

This system, which will yet receive further developments, answers without effort the principal questions which may present themselves.

For if we ask what is understood by a sapid body, we receive the reply that it is any soluble body fit to be absorbed by the organ of taste.

And if we ask how a sapid body acts, the answer is, that it acts every time that it is found in a state of solution so

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that it can penetrate in the cavities charged with receiving and transmitting the sensation.

In a word, nothing is *sapid* but that which is already dissolved or easily soluble.

SAVOURS

9. The number of savours is infinite, as each soluble body has a special savour, which does not entirely resemble that of any other.

Savours are also modified by their simple, double, or multiple aggregation; so that it is impossible to classify them, from the most pleasant to the most disagreeable, from the strawberry to the colocynth. Thus every one who has yet tried to do this has almost failed.

This result ought not to amaze us, for, it being granted that endless series of simple savours exist, which may be modified by their reciprocal union, in any number and in any quantity, a new language would be necessary to explain all these results, mountains of folios to describe them, and as yet unknown numeric characters to label them.

Now, as until to-day no circumstance has yet presented itself in which any savour could have been appreciated with perfect exactness, we have been obliged to be satisfied with a restricted number of general epithets, as sweet, sugary, acid, sharp, and similar ones, which are expressed in the final analysis by the words "agreeable" and "disagreeable," and which suffice to make us be understood, and to indicate more or less the gustatory properties of any *sapid* substance with which we are dealing.

Those who come after us will know more about it, and it is no longer permitted to doubt that chemistry will reveal to them the causes or the primitive elements of savours.

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INFLUENCE OF SMELL ON TASTE

10. The order I have indicated for myself has gradually brought me to the moment when I shall render to smell the rights that belong to it, and the recognition of the important services it renders to us in the appreciation of savours; for, amongst the authors whom I have perused, I have not found one who appears to have done entire and complete justice to it.

For myself, I am not only persuaded that without the participation of smell there is no perfect taste, but I am even tempted to believe that smell and taste only form one sense, of which the mouth is the laboratory and the nose the chimney; or to speak more exactly, that the tongue tastes tactile substances, and the nose gases.

This theory may be rigorously defended. Nevertheless, as I do not pretend to found a sect of my own, I only venture to expose it, to indicate to my readers a subject of thought, that they may see that I have carefully studied the subject I am treating. Now, I shall continue my demonstration on the subject of the importance of smell, if not as a constituent part of taste, at least as a necessary adjunct.

All sapid bodies must be necessarily odorous, which places them as well in the empire of smell as in the empire of taste.

We eat nothing without smelling it with more or less consciousness; and for unknown foods, the nose acts always as a sentinel, and cries, "Who goes there?"

When smell is interrupted, taste is paralysed. This is proved by three experiments, which any one may make successfully.

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First experiment. When the nasal mucous membrane is irritated by a violent cold in the head, taste is entirely obliterated. In anything we swallow, there is no taste. The tongue nevertheless remains in its normal state.

Second experiment. If we eat whilst holding tight our nose, we are much astonished only to experience the sensation of taste in an obscure and imperfect manner. By this means, the most disgusting medicines are swallowed almost without tasting them.

Third experiment. We see the same effect if, at the moment we have swallowed, instead of bringing back the tongue to its usual place, we keep it close to the palate. In this case, the circulation of the air is intercepted, the organs of smell are not affected, and taste does not occur.

These different effects depend upon the same cause, the lack of coöperation of the smell, which makes the sapid body to be appreciated only on account of its juice, and not for the odoriferous gas that emanates from it.

ANALYSIS OF THE SENSATION OF TASTE

11. These principles being thus laid down, I regard it as certain that taste gives rise to sensations of three different orders, namely: *direct* sensation, *complete* sensation, and *reflex* sensation.

Direct sensation is that first perception which arises from the immediate operation of the organs of the mouth, whilst the appreciable body is yet found on the point of the tongue.

Complete sensation is that which is composed of this first perception, and of the impression which originates when the food abandons this first position, passes into the back part of the mouth, and impresses the whole organ with both taste and perfume.

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Finally, *reflex* sensation is the judgment of the mind upon the impressions transmitted to it by the organ.

Let us apply this theory, and see what takes place in a man who eats and drinks.

He who eats a peach, for example, is at first agreeably struck by the odour which emanates from it; he puts it in his mouth, and feels a sensation of freshness and of sourness which induces him to continue; but it is only at the moment when he swallows it, and when the mouthful passes under the nasal fossa, that the perfume is revealed to him. This completes the sensation which a peach ought to produce. Finally, it is only when it has been swallowed that, considering what he has just experienced, the taster says to himself, "How delicious!"

So also, when we drink, while the wine is in the mouth, we are agreeably but not perfectly impressed; it is only at the moment when we have ceased to swallow that we may truly taste, appreciate, and discover the particular bouquet of each sort; and a little interval of time is necessary before the connoisseur can say, "It is good, middling, or bad. By Jove! this is Chambertin! Good Heavens! this is Suresnes!"

We see by this that it is according to principles, and on account of a well understood practice, that real lovers of wine sip it, because at each mouthful, when they stop, they have the sum total of the pleasure which they would have experienced if they had drunk the whole glass up at one draught. The same thing also occurs, but with much more energy, whenever the taste is disagreeably affected.

Look at this sick man, whom the faculty constrains to swallow an enormous glass of a black draught, such as wax drunk in the reign of Louis XIV.

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The smell, a faithful adviser, warns him against the repulsive flavour of the deceitful liquid. His eyes expand, as if at the approach of danger: disgust is on his lips, and already his stomach begins to rise. Nevertheless he is expostulated with; he takes courage, gargles his throat with brandy, holds his nose, and drinks . . .

So long as the detestable beverage fills the mouth and lines the organ, the sensation is confused and the condition bearable, but at the last mouthful after-tastes begin to be developed, nauseous odours arise, and the features of the patient express a horror and a disgust which is only braved through fear of death.

If the liquid be, on the contrary, merely insipid, as, for example, a glass of water, there is no taste or after-taste. Nothing is felt, nothing is thought of: we merely drink, and that is all.

SUCCESION OF THE DIVERS IMPRESSIONS OF TASTE

12. Taste is not so richly endowed as hearing: the latter can appreciate and compare many sounds at the same time; but taste, on the other hand, is actually simple — that is to say, that two flavours at once are equally inappreciable.

But it may be doubled and multiplied in succession — that is to say, that in one act of deglutition we may experience successively a second and even a third sensation, each of which gradually becomes more weak, and which are described by the words after-taste, bouquet, or fragrance. So, when a chord is struck, a skilful ear may distinguish one or many series of consonances, of which the number is as yet imperfectly known.

Those who eat rapidly and without attention do not

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discern secondary impressions. These are only the exclusive appanage of a small number of the elect, and it is by their means that the various substances submitted to their examination may be classified.

These transient diversities vibrate yet for a long time in the organ of taste. Without having the least idea of it, gastronomes will assume an appropriate position, and their judgments are always pronounced with outstretched neck, and with the nose upon the larboard tack.

ENJOYMENTS DUE TO THE TASTE

13. Let us now philosophically examine the pleasure or pain occasionally caused by taste.

We find, first of all, the application of this truth unfortunately too general, that man is much better organised for sorrow than for pleasure.

In fact, the injection of sharp, acrid, or bitter substances of the strongest character, can make us experience sensations extremely painful or sorrowful. It is even maintained that hydrocyanic acid only kills so promptly because it produces an agony so keen that the vital forces cannot endure it without succumbing.

Agreeable sensations, on the other hand, only run through a not very extensive scale, but as there is a very sensible difference between that which is insipid and that which flatters the taste, the interval is not so great between that which is recognised as good and that which is reputed as excellent. This is proven by the following examples: Firstly, a dry and hard piece of boiled beef; secondly, a piece of veal; thirdly, a pheasant done to a turn.

Nevertheless, taste, such as Nature has given to us, is

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yet one of our senses that, all things considered, procures to us the greatest number of enjoyments: —

1°. Because the pleasure of eating is the only one that, taken in moderation, is never followed by fatigue;

2°. Because it belongs to all times, all ages, and all conditions;

3°. Because it occurs necessarily at least once a day, and may be repeated without inconvenience two or three times in this space of time;

4°. Because it may be combined with all our other pleasures, and even console us for their absence;

5°. Because the impressions it receives are at the same time more durable and more dependent on our will;

6°. Finally, because in eating we receive a certain indefinable and special comfort, which arises from the intuitive consciousness that we repair our losses and prolong our existence by the food we eat.

This will be more amply developed in the chapter wherein we treat especially of the “Pleasures of the Table,” taken from that point of view to which our present civilisation has brought it.

SUPREMACY OF MAN

14. We have been brought up in the pleasant belief that amongst all the animals which walk, swim, creep, or fly, man is the one whose taste is most perfect.

This belief is liable to be upset.

Dr. Gall, relying on some examinations, says that there are many animals who have the organs of taste more developed and, therefore, more perfect than those of man. This is a very unpleasant doctrine, and smacks of heresy.

Man, by divine right king of all creation, and for whose

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benefit the earth has been covered and peopled, must necessarily be provided with organs which can adequately appreciate all that is sapid amongst his subjects.

The tongue of animals does not exceed the reach of their intelligence. In fishes, it is only a movable bone; in birds, it is generally a membranous cartilage; in quadrupeds, it is often covered with scales or asperities, and, moreover, has no circumflex motions.

The tongue of man, on the other hand, by the delicacy of its texture and the various membranes with which it is environed and surrounded, sufficiently indicates the sublimity of the operations for which it is destined.

I have, besides, discovered at least three movements unknown to animals, and which I name *spication*, *rotation*, and *verrition*. The first is when the tongue, in a conical shape, comes from between the lips that compress it; the second, when the tongue moves circularly in the space comprised between the interior of the cheeks and the palate; the third, when the tongue, curving upwards or downwards, gathers anything which remains in the semi-circular canal formed by the lips and the gums.

Animals are limited in their tastes: some only live on vegetables; others only eat flesh; some nourish themselves exclusively on grain; none of them knows composite flavours.

Man, on the contrary, is omnivorous. Everything which is eatable is subject to his enormous appetite; hence, as a consequence, his gustatory powers must be proportionate to the general use he has to make of them. In fact, the power of taste is of a rare perfection in man, and we have only to convince ourselves of this by seeing it in operation.

The moment an esculent body is introduced into the

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mouth, it is for ever confiscated, with all its gases and juices.

The lips prevent its going back; the teeth take hold of it and crush it; the saliva imbibes it; the tongue mixes it and turns it over and over; an aspiratory motion pushes it towards the gullet; the tongue raises it up to let it slide down; the sense of smell perceives it as it goes along, and it is thrown into the stomach, to undergo ulterior transformations. But throughout this operation there is not a single particle, a drop, or an atom, which has not been submitted to the appreciative power.

It is on account of this perfection that *gourmandise* belongs exclusively to man.

This *gourmandise* is even contagious, and we impart it readily to the animals which we have appropriated to our use, and which, to a certain extent, have become our companions, such as elephants, dogs, cats, and even parrots.

If some animals have the tongue larger, the palate more developed, the gullet wider, it is because this tongue, acting as a muscle, is destined to move great weights; the palate to press, the gullet to swallow larger portions; but any sound analogy is opposed to the inference that their sense of taste is more perfect.

Besides, since taste can only be judged by the nature of the sensation which it carries to a common centre, the impression received by the animal cannot be compared with that experienced by man; this latter is clearer and more precise, and necessarily supposes a superior quality in the organ which transmits it.

Finally, can we hope for any improvement in a faculty susceptible of such a point of perfection that the *gourmands* of Rome distinguished, by taste alone, the fish

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caught between the bridges from that which had been caught lower down. Do we not see some in our own days that can distinguish by its superior flavour the thigh on which the partridge leans while sleeping? And have we not plenty of *gourmets* who are able to indicate the latitude under which a wine has ripened, as certainly as a pupil of Biot or Arago can foretell an eclipse?

What follows from all this? That we should render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, proclaim man the great *gourmand* of nature, and not be surprised if the good doctor nods sometimes like Homer —

“ . . . *aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.*”

METHOD ADOPTED BY THE AUTHOR

15. Up to the present time we have only examined taste from a physical point of view, and, unless in some anatomical details which few will regret, we have kept to the level of science. But here does not finish the task which is imposed on us, because it is especially from its moral point of view that this reparative sense draws its importance and glory.

We have therefore arranged, in analytical order, the theories and the facts which compose the totality of this history, in such a manner that instruction without fatigue will be the result.

Thus, in the chapters which are about to follow, we shall show how sensations of taste, by being repeated and reflected, have perfected the organ and extended the sphere of its powers: how the desire for food, which was at first but an instinct, has become an important passion, which has a marked influence on all which relates to society.

We shall also show how all the sciences that have to deal

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with the composition of bodies classify and place in a separate category all those appreciable to taste, and how various travellers have followed in the same direction by placing before us substances that Nature never had destined to come together.

We shall follow chemistry to the very moment when she has penetrated into our subterranean laboratories to enlighten our food-preparers, to lay down principles, to create methods, and to unveil causes which up till then had remained hidden.

Finally, we shall see how, by the combined power of time and experience, a new science has suddenly appeared amongst us, which feeds, restores, preserves, persuades, consoles, and, not content with throwing, with an open hand, flowers over the career of each individual, contributes also powerfully to the strength and the prosperity of kingdoms.

If, in the midst of such grave lucubrations, a piquant anecdote, a pleasant remembrance, or some souvenir of a life of many ups and downs, should come on the tip of my pen, it may slip freely to relieve a little the attention of my readers. Their number will not affright us, and we shall be glad to talk with them; for, if they are men, we are certain that they are as indulgent as well informed; and, if they are ladies, they, of course, are charming.

Here the professor, full of his subject, lets his hand drop, and rises into the higher regions. He ascends the torrent of ages, and takes from their cradle the sciences which have for their object the gratification of taste; he follows their progress across the night of time, and, seeing that in the pleasures they procure us, early centuries were less profitable than those which followed them, he seizes his lyre, and sings, in the Dorian mode, the historical melopœa which will be found among the "Varieties" at the end of this volume.

MEDITATION III

ON GASTRONOMY

ORIGIN OF SCIENCES

16. THE sciences are not like Minerva, who sprang in full armour out of the brain of Jupiter; they are the daughters of Time, and were matured insensibly, at first, by an accumulation of the methods indicated by experience, and later by the discovery of the principles which may be deduced from the combination of these methods.

Thus the first old men who, on account of their discretion, were called to the bedside of invalids, whose compassion induced them to dress wounds, were also the first physicians.

The shepherds of Egypt, who observed that some stars, after a certain time, were always to be found in the same place in the heavens, were the first astronomers.

He who first explained by symbols the simple proposition "two and two make four," created mathematics, this powerful science which actually raises man on the throne of the universe.

In the course of the last sixty years that have just passed away, many new sciences have taken their places in the system of our knowledge, and among others, stereotomy, descriptive geometry, and the chemistry of gases.

All these sciences, cultivated during an infinite number of generations, will make so much the more progress, as printing frees an author from the danger of retrograding. Who knows, for example, if the chemistry of gases may

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not ultimately overcome those elements which are as yet rebellious, whether they may not be mixed and combined in proportions yet unattempted; and, by these means, substances and effects be obtained which would yet more extend the limit of our powers.

ORIGIN OF GASTRONOMY

17. Gastronomy has appeared, in her turn, and all the sister sciences have made way for it.

What, indeed, can be refused to a science which sustains us from the cradle to the grave, which enhances the pleasures of love and the intimacy of friendship, which disarms hatred, renders business more easy, and offers us, in the short journey of life, the only recreation which, not being followed by fatigue, makes us yet find relief from all others?

Without doubt, as long as the food-preparations were entrusted to salaried servants, and the secrets of the craft remained underground, as long as cooks alone kept the matter to themselves, and books of directions alone were written, the results of such labours were merely the products of an art.

But finally, perhaps too late, learned men approached the subject.

They examined, analysed, and classified alimentary substances, and reduced them to their most simple constituents.

They fathomed the mysteries of assimilation, and, tracing inert matter through its metamorphoses, they saw how it became endowed with life.

They studied food in its transitory or permanent effects for some days, some months, or even for a whole lifetime.

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They have estimated its influence even upon the faculty of thought, whether the soul is impressed by the senses, or whether it feels without the aid of these organs, and from all these labours they have deduced a lofty theory which embraces the whole man and the whole part of the creation which can become animalised.

Whilst all these things were taking place in the studies of men of science, it was said aloud in the drawing-rooms that a science which nourishes men is probably worth at least as much as one which teaches them to kill each other; poets sang the praises of the table, and the books on good cheer displayed deeper views and maxims of a more general interest.

Such are the circumstances which have preceded the advent of gastronomy.

DEFINITION OF GASTRONOMY

18. Gastronomy is the rational knowledge of all that relates to man as an eater.

Its object is to watch over the preservation of men, by means of the best nourishment possible.

It arrives thereat by laying down certain principles to direct those who look for, furnish, or prepare the things which may be converted into food.

Thus it is gastronomy that sets in motion farmers, vine-growers, fishers, hunters, and the numerous family of cooks, whatever may be their title, or under whatever qualification they may disguise their occupation of preparing food.

Gastronomy is connected —

With natural history, by its classification of alimentary substances;

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With physics, by the investigation of their composition and of their qualities;

With chemistry, by the different analyses and decompositions which it makes them undergo;

With cookery, by the art of preparing food and rendering it more agreeable to taste;

With commerce, by the search for means to buy at the cheapest rate possible what is consumed by it, and selling to the greatest advantage that which is presented for sale.

Finally, with political economy, by the resources which it furnishes to the authorities for taxation, and by the means of exchange which it establishes among nations.

Gastronomy rules the entire life; for the tears of the newborn babe call for the breast of the nurse, and the dying man receives still with some pleasure the last cooling drink, which, alas! he can no longer digest.

It has to do, also, with all the states of society; for it presides at the banquets of assembled kings, and also calculates the number of minutes of ebullition which a fresh egg requires to be properly boiled.

The material subject belonging to gastronomy is everything which may be eaten; its direct object, the preservation of individuals, and its means of execution; cultivation which produces, commerce which exchanges, industry which prepares, and experience which invents the means of turning everything to the best account.

VARIOUS OBJECTS TREATED ON BY GASTRONOMY

19. Gastronomy considers taste in its pleasures as well as in its pains. It has discovered the gradual degrees of excitation of which it is susceptible; it has rendered their action more regular, and laid down limits that a man who

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respects himself should never overstep. It also considers the action of food on the morals of man, on his imagination, his mind, judgment, courage, and perceptions, either waking, sleeping, working, or resting.

It is gastronomy that determines the degree of esculence of every alimentary object, for all are not presentable at table under the same circumstances.

Some should be eaten before they have arrived at their entire development, as capers, asparagus, sucking-pigs, pigeons, and other animals which are eaten when they are young; others, the moment they have attained all the perfection destined for them, as melons, most fruits, mutton, beef, and all animals eaten when full grown; others, when they commence to be decomposed, as medlars, woodcocks, and especially pheasants; others, finally, after the operations of art have taken from them their deleterious qualities, as the potato, the cassava root, and others.

It is also gastronomy that classifies all these substances according to their diverse qualities, which indicates those that should go together, and which, taking into account the quantity of nourishment they contain, distinguishes those which ought to form the basis of our repasts from those that are mere accessories, and also from those which, though being no longer necessary, are nevertheless an agreeable distraction, and become the necessary accompaniment of convivial gossip.

Gastronomy takes no less interest in the drinks which are destined for us, according to time, place, and climate. It teaches us to prepare them, preserve them, and, above all, to present them in such an order, that the pleasure continually increases, until gratification ends and abuse begins.

It is gastronomy which examines men and things for the

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purpose of transporting from one country to another everything which merits to be known, and which orders that a feast skilfully arranged should be like the world in miniature, where each quarter of the world is typified by its representatives.

USE OF GASTRONOMIC KNOWLEDGE

20. Some knowledge of gastronomy is necessary to all men, inasmuch as it tends to augment the sum of happiness which is allotted to them. This utility augments in proportion as it is applied to the most comfortable classes of society; finally, it is indispensable to those who, enjoying a large income, receive much company, either because in this respect they think they must keep up an appearance, follow their own fancy, or yield to fashion.

There is this special advantage that they take even a personal interest in the manner wherein their table is kept, that they are able to superintend, up to a certain point, the compulsory guardians of their confidence, and even on many occasions to direct them.

The Prince de Soubise one day intended to give a feast which was to finish with a supper, and he asked that the bill of fare should be shown to him.

At his *levée* came the steward with a beautifully ornamented document, and the first article which caught the eye of the prince was "fifty hams."

"Hullo, Bertrand!" said he, "you must be out of your senses. Fifty hams! Do you want to feed all my regiment?"

"No, Your Highness, there will only appear one on the table; but the others are not the less necessary for my concentrated gravy, my *blonds*, my trimmings, my . . ."

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"Bertrand, you are cheating me, and I cannot let this item pass."

"Ah, my lord," said the artist, scarcely able to retain his rage, "you do not know our resources. Give the order, and I will put these fifty hams that annoy you into a glass phial not much larger than my thumb."

What reply could be made to so positive an assertion? The prince smiled, nodded assent, and so the item was passed.

INFLUENCE OF GASTRONOMY ON BUSINESS

21. We know that among the men who are still almost primitive, no matter of importance is treated except at table; it is in the midst of banquets that savages decide on war or peace, and we need not go far to see that villagers do all their business at the public-house.

This observation has not escaped those who frequently deal with the most weighty affairs. They saw that a man with a full stomach was very different from a man fasting; that a certain bond was formed at table between hosts and guests; that it made guests more apt to receive certain impressions and to submit to certain influences. Thus was born political gastronomy. Dinners have become a means of government, and the fate of peoples are decided at a banquet. This is neither a paradox nor even a novelty, but a simple observation of facts. If we look at any historian, from the time of Herodotus up to our own days, it will be seen that, without even excepting conspiracies, no great event ever took place that was not previously concocted, planned, and determined upon at a banquet.

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A GASTRONOMIC ACADEMY

22. Such is, at the first glance, the domain of gastronomy — a domain fertile in results of every sort, and which cannot be extended except by the discoveries and inventions of those who cultivate it. Nay, in a few years gastronomy will have its academicians, its courses of lectures, its professors, and prizes.

At first, some zealous and wealthy gastronome will establish at his own home periodical assemblies, where the most learned theorists will unite with artists to discuss and investigate the various branches of alimentary science.

Thereupon, for such is the history of all academies, the government will interfere, codify, protect, and establish some institution; it will take an opportunity to compensate the public for all orphans made in war, for all the Ariadnes who have been made to shed tears by the summons to combat.

The man of influence will be happy to associate his name with so necessary an institution. This name will be repeated from age to age with those of Noah, Bacchus, Tripolemus, and other benefactors of humanity; he will be among ministers what Henri IV is amongst kings; his praise will be in every mouth, though no statute will be required to enforce this.

MEDITATION IV

APPETITE

DEFINITION OF APPETITE

23. MOTION and life occasion in the living body a constant loss of substance, and the human body, which is a complicated machine, would soon be unfit for use, if Providence did not provide it with a compensating balance, which marks the very moment when its powers are no longer in equilibrium with its wants.

This monitor is the appetite. We understand by this word the first impression of a desire to eat.

Appetite is announced by a little languor in the stomach and a slight sensation of fatigue.

At the same time the mind is occupied with objects analogous to its wants; memory remembers the things that flattered the taste; imagination fancies it sees them — in fact, it is something like a dream. This state is not without pleasure, and we have heard a thousand times skilful gastronomes exclaim with joyfulness, “What a comfort it is to have a good appetite, when we are certain of soon having a good meal!”

However, the whole alimentary system is in motion. The stomach becomes sensitive, the gastric juices are excited and the internal gases are displaced with noise, the mouth becomes moist, and all the digestive powers are under arms, like soldiers ready for action who merely await the word of command. After a few moments there may be spasmodic motions, gaping and pain; one feels hungry.

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We may see all these gradations, in their different stages, in every drawing-room when dinner is delayed.

They are so inherent to man's nature that the most exquisite politeness cannot disguise these symptoms. Hence I have deduced the apophthegm: Of all the qualities of the cook the most indispensable is punctuality.

ANECDOTE

24. To support this grave maxim, I shall relate what I have observed myself at a party where I was, *quorum pars magna fui*, and where the pleasure of observing saved me from anguish and misery.

I was one day invited to dine at the house of a high public functionary. The letter of invitation was for "five-thirty," and at the appointed moment everybody was there, for it was known that the minister liked punctuality, and sometimes scolded the dilatory.

I was struck, when coming in, by the air of consternation which I saw amongst the company. People whispered together and looked into the courtyard through the window; some faces indicated stupefaction; certainly something extraordinary had happened.

I approached one of the guests whom I thought could most likely satisfy my curiosity, and asked him what was the matter. "Alas!" he answered, in tones of the deepest sorrow, "my lord has been summoned to the Council of State; he has just gone, and who knows when he will return?" "Is that all?" said I, with a careless air that was very different from my real feelings. "At most, this is an affair of a quarter of an hour: they may have required some information; we know that to-day an official dinner is given here, and there can be no reason to make us fast."

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I spoke thus; but, in fact, I was not so easy, and wished that I were far away.

The first hour passed well enough; those who were intimate sat near to each other; commonplace topics were worn out, and people amused themselves with conjectures as to the reason of our dear host being called to the Tuileries.

At the second hour we began to perceive a few symptoms of impatience. People looked anxiously at each other, and the first to grumble were three or four guests who, having found no place to sit in, were not in a comfortable position to wait.

At the third hour the discontent became general, and everybody complained. "When will he return?" said one. "What is he thinking about?" said another. "It will be the death of some of us!" said a third. Every one put to himself, without ever replying to it, the question, "Shall we go or not?"

At the fourth hour all the symptoms became aggravated: people stretched their arms at the risk of knocking out their neighbours' eyes; loud yawning was heard from all parts of the room; all the faces bore the marks of concentration, and no one listened to me when I said that his absence would probably grieve our *Amphitryon* more than any of us.

Our attention was diverted for a moment by an apparition. One of the guests, better acquainted with the house than the others, had found his way to the kitchens, and now returned out of breath. His face announced that the end of the world was at hand and he cried out with a scarcely articulate voice, and in that muffled tone which signifies at the same time the fear of making a noise and the desire of being understood, "My lord has gone away

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without giving any orders, and however long his absence may be, dinner will not be served till his return." The alarm caused by his speech will not be exceeded by the effect of the trumpet on the day of judgment.

Among all those martyrs, the most unhappy was the good d'Aigrefeuille, well known to all Paris. His whole body seemed to suffer, and the agony of Laocoön was depicted on his face. Pale, terrified, seeing nothing, he crouched in an easy chair, crossed his little hands on his big belly, and closed his eyes not to sleep, but to await death.

It came not, however. Towards ten o'clock a carriage was heard to roll into the courtyard. Everybody arose with a spontaneous movement. Liveliness succeeded to dejection, and in five minutes we were at table.

But the hour of appetite had gone. Every one was surprised at having to dine at such an unseasonable time; the jaws had none of that isochronous action which announces regular work; and I know that many guests were inconvenienced by this dinner.

In similar cases, the proper course to be taken is not to eat immediately after the obstacle has ceased, but to drink a glass of *eau sucrée* or a small basin of soup to sustain the stomach; and to wait then for twelve or fifteen minutes. Unless you do so, the irritated stomach will be oppressed by the weight of food with which it is overloaded.

GREAT APPETITES

25. When we see in early books the preparations made to receive two or three persons, and the enormous portions served up to one single guest, we must conclude that the men who lived nearer than ourselves to the

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cradle of the world were also endowed with much greater appetites.

This appetite was fancied to increase in direct proportion with the dignity of the personage, and he to whom nothing less than a whole baron of five-year-old beef would be served was destined to drink from a cup he could scarcely lift.

Some individuals have existed more recently, as a testimony of what might have occurred long ago; and there are on record many examples of a voracity scarcely imaginable, and which included everything, even the foulest objects.

I shall spare these unpleasant details to my readers, and I prefer to tell them two particular instances which I witnessed, and which do not require on their part a very implicit faith.

Some forty years ago, I went to pay a flying visit to the vicar of Bregnier, a very tall man, and known throughout the district for his appetite.

Although it was scarcely noon, I found him already at table. The soup and *bouilli* had been removed, and to these stock dishes had succeeded a leg of mutton *à la royale*, a rather fine capon, and a large bowl of salad.

As soon as he saw me come in, he ordered another knife and fork, but I declined. And I was right; for alone, and without aid, he quite easily got rid of everything, leaving of the leg of mutton nothing but its shank, of the fowl nothing but its bones, and of salad nothing but the dish.

They brought him soon a rather large white cheese, in which he made an angular breach of ninety degrees; the whole being washed down with a bottle of wine and a decanter of water, after which he lay down.

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What pleased me most was to see that, during the whole of this performance, which lasted nearly three quarters of an hour, the venerable pastor never seemed busy. The huge pieces he threw into his capacious mouth did not prevent him either from speaking or talking, and he finished all that was put before him as easily as if he had only eaten three larks.

It was the same with General Bisson, who drank each day eight bottles of wine at his breakfast, without ever seeming to do anything of the kind. He had a larger glass than the others, and emptied it oftener; but you would have said that he did not care for it, for having thus imbibed sixteen pints of liquid, he was as able to jest and to give his orders as if he had only drunk a small decanter.

This second instance recalls to me my townsman, the gallant General Prosper Sibuet, long chief aide-de-camp of Marshal Massena, who was killed on the field of battle in 1813 at the passage of the Bober.

Prosper was eighteen years old, and had that happy appetite by which Nature announces her intention of completing a well-formed man, when he entered one evening the kitchen of Genin, an innkeeper at whose place the worthies of Belley usually met to eat chestnuts and to drink some new white wine, which was called *vin bourru*, or "cross-grain" wine.

There had been just taken from the spit a magnificent turkey, a fine bird, well made, beautifully browned, done to a turn, and of which the flavour would have tempted a saint.

The worthies, who were no longer hungry, paid no attention; but the digestive powers of young Prosper were

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stirred within him; his mouth watered, and he exclaimed, "I have only just left the table; but I'll lay a bet to eat up that big turkey all by myself."

"Sez vosu mezó, z'u payo," replied Bouvier du Bouchet, a large farmer, who was present; "ê sez vos caca en rotaz, i-zet voket pairé et may ket mezerai la restaz." "If you'll eat it, I shall pay for it; but if you stop eating, then you'll pay, and I'll eat the rest."

Instantly commencing, the young athlete neatly cut off a wing, swallowed it in two mouthfuls, after which he kept his teeth in play by crunching the neck of the bird, and drank a glass of wine as an interlude.

Soon he attacked the thigh, ate it up with the same self-possession, and despatched a second glass of wine to clear the way for the remainder.

Immediately the second wing followed the same road; it disappeared, and the performer, even more animated, as keen as ever, was already taking hold of the only remaining limb, when the unhappy farmer cried out in a doleful tone: "Hai! ze vaie praou qu'izet fotu, m'ez, Monche Chibouet, poez kaet zu daive païet, lessé m'en a men meziek on mocho." ¹

Prosper was as good a fellow as he afterwards proved himself a good soldier; he consented to the request of his antagonist, who had for his share the carcass of the bird in rather good condition, but who paid cheerfully both for the turkey and for the usual accompaniments.

General Sibuet was very fond of telling about this prowess of his youth, and used to say that his taking the farmer into partnership was an act of mere courtesy, and

¹ "Alas! I see that it is all over; but, Monsieur Sibuet, as I must pay for it, please let me have a little bit to myself."

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that he was certain that, without this assistance, he would have been able to gain the wager. When he was forty years old there remained to him an appetite which did not permit us to doubt his assertion.

MEDITATION V

ON FOOD IN GENERAL

SECTION I

DEFINITION

26. WHAT is understood by food?

The popular answer is: — Food is everything that nourishes us.

The scientific answer is: — We understand by food the substances which, submitted to the stomach, can be assimilated by digestion, and repair the losses which the human body suffers by the wear and tear of life.

Thus the distinctive quality of food consists in its capability to be assimilated by an animal.

ANALYSIS

27. The animal and vegetable kingdoms are those which up to the present time have furnished the food of the human race. From minerals have been only taken medicines or poisons.

Since analytical chemistry has become a certain science, we have gained greater insight into the double nature of the elements of which our body is composed, and of those substances which nature seems to have intended to repair its losses.

These two branches of study have a close analogy, inasmuch as man is composed in a great part of the same substances as the animals he feeds upon, and as it is neces-

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sary also to look amongst vegetables for the affinities which render them capable of being assimilated by animals.

In these two branches the most praiseworthy, and at the same time the most minute, efforts have been made to carry on the investigation, which extends either to the body of man or to the food whereby he repairs his losses. This examination is made at first into the secondary particles, and finally in their elements, beyond which we are as yet not permitted to penetrate.

Here I had intended to insert a little treatise on the chemistry of food, and to teach my readers how many thousandths parts of carbon, hydrogen, etc., may exist in them and in the meats on which they feed; but I have been stopped by the reflection that I could only fulfil this task by merely copying the excellent treatises on chemistry which are in the hands of everybody. Moreover, I feared to fall into dry details, and I have limited myself to a methodical nomenclature, — except, here and there, where some chemical results are mentioned in terms less bristling and more intelligible.

OSMAZOME

28. The greatest service chemistry has rendered to the science of food is the discovery, or rather the exact definition, of osmazome.

Osmazome is that eminently sapid part of meat which is soluble in cold water, and which is distinguished from the extractive part, because the latter is only soluble in boiling water.

It is osmazome which constitutes the real merit of good soups. When it has passed into a state resembling caramel it forms the browning of meat, as well as the crisp-brown



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of roast-meat; finally, from it the odour of venison and game arise.

Osmazome is derived, above all, from full-grown animals with dark reddish flesh, such as are called "meaty"; it is only found in very small quantity or is absent in lamb, sucking-pigs, fowls, or even in the white meat of the largest poultry: it is for this reason that real connoisseurs have always preferred the thick part of the thigh; their instinct of taste has anticipated science.

The anticipated knowledge of the existence of osmazome has also caused so many cooks to be dismissed for having appropriated the first soups. This has made the reputation of the *soupes de primes*; the use of some broth as a restorative after bathing, and which led Canon Chevrier to invent padlocks for his stockpots. This same canon would never have spinach served up on Fridays that had not been cooked the Sunday before, and put every day on the fire, with a new addition of fresh butter.

Finally, it is to prevent any waste of this substance, although yet unknown, that the maxim was introduced which says that, to make good soup, the pot must only simmer or "smile," an expression very significant for the country that originated it.

Osmazome, discovered after having been so long the pleasure of our forefathers, may be compared to alcohol, that had intoxicated many generations before it became known that it could be extracted by distillation.

After osmazome comes, by meat being treated with boiling water, what is understood especially as "extractive matter"; this latter product, combined with osmazome, forms the gravy of the meat.

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THE COMPOSITION OF FOODS

Fibre is what composes the tissue of the meat, and what is apparent after cooking. Fibre resists boiling water, and keeps its form although deprived of a part of its envelopes. To carve meat properly, we should take care that the fibre is at a right angle, or nearly so, with the blade of the knife, because meat cut thus looks better, tastes nicer, and is more easily chewed.

Bones consist principally of gelatine and of phosphate of lime.

The quantity of gelatine diminishes as we grow older. At seventy years, bones are only a kind of imperfect marble. This is the reason why they are so easily broken; which should teach all old people to be careful, and to avoid occasions of falling.

Albumen is found as well in flesh as in blood. It coagulates at a lower temperature than 104° Fahrenheit, and forms the scum on soups.

Gelatine is also found in the bones, and in the soft and cartilaginous parts. Its distinctive quality is that of coagulating at the ordinary temperature of the atmosphere; two and a half per cent., infused in warm water, suffices.

Gelatine is the basis of all jellies, blanc-mange, and similar preparations.

Fat is a concrete oil, which is formed in the interstices of the cellular tissue, and is sometimes accumulated in masses in animals that are predisposed that way by Nature or art, as pigs, poultry, ortolans, and beccaficos. In some of these animals it loses its insipidity, and gives out a slight flavour, which renders it very agreeable.

Blood is composed of albuminous serum, of fibrine, of

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a little gelatine, and a little osmazome. It coagulates in hot water, and becomes a very nourishing article of food, the black pudding.

All the principles we have passed under review are common to man, and to the animals on which he is accustomed to feed. It is therefore not surprising that an animal diet is eminently restorative and strengthening, because the particles whereof it is composed having with ours a great similitude, and being already animalised, may easily animalise themselves anew when they are submitted to the vital action of our digestive organs.

THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM

29. Nevertheless the vegetable kingdom presents for nutritive purposes as much variety and resources.

Starch is essentially nutritious, and the more so as it is less mixed with foreign principles.

We understand by starch the flour or dust that may be obtained from cereal grains, leguminous plants, and from many sorts of roots, amongst which the potato holds the first rank at the present day.

Starch is the basis of bread, of pastry, and of *purées* of all kinds, and thus to a great degree enters into the nourishment of nearly every nation.

It has been remarked that such a nourishment softens the fibre and diminishes the courage. We may refer to the Hindoos, who live almost exclusively on rice, and who have become subjugated by any one who chose to conquer them.

Nearly all the domestic animals eat starch with avidity, and they are made by it, on the contrary, extremely strong, inasmuch as it is a more substantial nourishment than the dry or green vegetables which form their habitual food.

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Sugar is not less important, either as a food or as a medicine.

This substance, once imported from the Indies or the colonies, became indigenous in France at the commencement of this century. It has been discovered and traced in grapes, turnips, chestnuts, and especially in beetroot; so that, strictly speaking, Europe might, in this respect, suffice for its own production and consumption, and dispense with America and the Indies. This is an important service which science has rendered to society, and an example that may have by and by greater results. (See the article on Sugar, § viii., 45.)

Sugar, either in the solid state or in the various plants in which Nature has placed it, is extremely nourishing. Animals are fond of it, and the English give it frequently to their favourite horses, as they have remarked that thus they can stand better the various trials to which they have to submit.

Sugar, which, in the days of Louis XIV, was only sold by apothecaries, has given birth to many lucrative professions, such as pastry-cooks, confectioners, liqueur manufacturers, and other dealers in sweet stuff.

Sweet oils are also derived from the vegetable kingdom: they are only esculent as far as they are united with other substances, and ought principally to be regarded as a seasoning.

Gluten, which is found especially in corn, contributes powerfully to the fermentation of the bread of which it forms a part. Some chemists assign to it somewhat of an animal nature.

They make in Paris, for children and birds, and for men in some departments, a kind of pastry wherein gluten

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predominates, a part of the starch having been removed by water.

Mucilage owes its nutritive quality to the various substances to which it serves as a vehicle.

Gum may, in need, be used as a food, which ought not to surprise us, inasmuch as it contains nearly the same elements as sugar.

Vegetable gelatine, which is extracted from many sorts of fruit, especially apples, gooseberries, quinces, and some others, may also serve as a food. It fulfils this function better combined with sugar, but much less than the animal jellies which are derived from bones, horns, calves' feet, and isinglass. It generally forms a light, mild, and healthy nourishment, and is much used both in the kitchen and in the pantry.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAT AND LEAN

Excepting the gravy, which, as we have said, is composed of osmazome and an extractive basis, we find in fishes most of the substances which we have observed in land animals, such as fibrine, gelatine, albumen. So that we may truly say that it is the gravy which makes the difference between an ordinary dinner and Lenten fare.

Lenten fare is also characterized by another peculiarity. Fish contains a considerable quantity of phosphorus and hydrogen — that is to say, two of the most combustible elements in nature. It follows from this that fish diet is most heating, which may perhaps account for a certain reputation formerly enjoyed by some religious orders, whose manner of living was directly in contradiction with one of their vows, which was then already reputed to be the most fragile.

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INDIVIDUAL INSTANCE

30. I shall not say more on this physiological question; but I ought not to omit a fact of which the truth can easily be verified.

Some years ago I went to call at a country house, in a little hamlet near Paris, situated on the banks of the Seine, opposite the island of Saint-Denis, which hamlet consisted chiefly of eight fishing huts. I was struck with the quantity of children I saw swarming on the road.

I expressed my astonishment to the boatman who was rowing me across. "Sir," he said, "we are only eight families here, and we have fifty-three children, of whom forty-nine are girls and only four boys; one of these boys is mine." As he spoke, he held up his head with a triumphant air, and showed me a little scamp of five or six years old, lying in the bows of the boat, crunching some raw cray-fish.

From this observation, made more than ten years ago, and from several others that I cannot as easily give, I have been led to think that the genetic properties produced by a fish diet appear to be rather excitant than plethoric or substantial. I am still more inclined to this opinion when I see that, quite lately, Dr. Bailly has proved, as the result of observations made for nearly a century, that whenever in the annual list of births the number of girls is much larger than that of boys, the excess of females is invariably due to debilitating circumstances, which may also explain to us why some jokes have been made at all times about a husband whose wife is brought to bed of a daughter.

Many things might be said on foods considered as a whole, and on the diverse modifications that may arise when they are mixed. But I trust that what precedes will more than

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suffice for the greatest number of my readers. I refer the others to the professional treatises, and I shall conclude with two remarks which are not without some importance.

The first is, that animalisation is produced nearly in the same manner as vegetation — that is to say, that the reparatory current formed by the digestion is inhaled in various manners by the sieves or suckers with which our organs are provided, and becomes flesh, nails, bone, or hairs, as the same earth, watered by the same water, may produce a radish, a lettuce, or a dandelion, according to the seeds the gardener has planted in it.

The second is, that we do not obtain in a living organism the same products as in abstract chemistry, for the organs destined to produce life and movement act powerfully on the elementary substances that are submitted to them.

But Nature, who likes to wrap herself in veils, and to stop us at the second or third step, has concealed the laboratory wherein she performs her transformations, and it is really difficult to explain how, given a human body containing lime, sulphur, phosphorus, iron, and ten other substances besides, the whole may nevertheless be sustained and renewed during several years with bread and water alone.

MEDITATION VI

SPECIAL KINDS OF FOOD

SECTION II

31. WHEN I commenced to write, my table of contents was already made out, and I had the whole plan of my book in my head; nevertheless, I only have progressed slowly, because a part of my time was devoted to graver occupations.

In the meanwhile, some parts of the subject that I had thought to be my very own had been touched upon by others. Elementary works on chemistry and *materia medica* have been put into the hands of every one, and several things which I imagined I should teach for the first time have become already popular. For example, I have devoted to the chemistry of the stock-pot some pages whereof the substance will be found in two or three recently published works.

Consequently, I have been obliged to revise this portion of my work, and I have so condensed it that it is reduced to a few elementary principles, to some theories that cannot be too widely known, and to a few observations, the fruit of a long experience, and which I trust will be new to the great majority of my readers.

§ I. POT-AU-FEU, SOUP, ETC.

32. We call *pot-au-feu* a piece of beef put into boiling water, with a little salt, to extract its soluble parts.

SPECIAL KINDS OF FOOD

The *bouillon* is the fluid which remains after the operation.

Bouilli is the flesh deprived of its soluble parts.

Water dissolves at first a part of the osmazome; then the albumen coagulates at about 104 degrees Fahrenheit, and forms the scum, which is usually skimmed off. The remainder of the osmazome, with the extractive part or juice, is next dissolved; and, finally, some part of the envelopes of the fibres, which are detached by the continuous boiling.

To have good *bouillon*, the water must be heated gently, so that the albumen should not coagulate within the meat before being extracted; the boiling should be scarcely perceptible, so that the various parts which are successively dissolved may be mixed thoroughly and without trouble.

Vegetables or roots are added to the stock to improve the flavour, and bread or pastes to render it more nourishing. This is what is called a *potage* or soup.

Soup is a wholesome, light, and nutritious food, which suits everybody. It comforts the stomach, and disposes it to receive and to digest food. Persons inclined to be stout should take only *bouillon*.

It is generally admitted that soup is never made so well as in France, and I have observed in my travels the truth of this statement confirmed. This result ought not to surprise us, as soup is the basis of our French national diet, and the experience of centuries must necessarily have made it more and more perfect.

§ II. OF BOUILLI

33. *Bouilli* is a wholesome food, which satisfies hunger readily, is easily enough digested, but which alone

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does not give much strength, inasmuch as the meat has lost in the boiling a part of the animalisable juices.

We may take it as a general rule in housekeeping, that beef loses half of its weight when boiled.

We may group under four categories all persons who eat *bouilli*.

1°. Men of routine, who eat it because their ancestors ate it, and who, following this practice implicitly, expect their children to imitate them.

2°. Impatient men, who, detesting to be inactive even at table, have acquired the habit of throwing themselves at once upon whatever is first put before them (*materiam subjectam*).

3°. Inattentive men, who, not having received from heaven the sacred fire, look upon dining as a period of forced labour, put on the same level anything which can nourish them, and are at table like an oyster on its bed.

4°. Gluttons, who, gifted with an appetite of which they seek to conceal the capacity, hasten to throw into their stomach the first victim they can find to appease the gastric fire which devours them, and to serve as a basis for all the different things they wish to send the same way.

Real gastronomes never eat *bouilli* on principle, and because they have heard it authoritatively stated as an incontestable truth that *bouilli* is meat without gravy.¹

§ III. POULTRY

34. I am a strong partisan of second causes, and I believe firmly that the entire gallinaceous order has been

¹ This is a truth that is beginning to be understood, and *bouilli* has disappeared in first-class dinners. It is replaced by a piece of roast meat, a turbot, or a *matelotte*.

SPECIAL KINDS OF FOOD

merely created to furnish our larders and to enrich our banquets.

In fact, from the quail to the turkey, wherever we meet an individual of this numerous family, we are certain of finding a light and savoury food, which is as suitable to a convalescent as to a man who enjoys the most robust health.

For who is there amongst us, condemned by the medical faculty to the fare of the hermits in the desert, who has not smiled at seeing a neatly-carved wing of a chicken, announcing his return to social life?

We are not satisfied with the qualities that Nature has given to the gallinaceous race. Art has taken possession of them, and, on the pretext of improving them, has made them into martyrs. They are not merely deprived of the means of reproduction, but they are kept in solitude, thrown into darkness, and forced to eat. They are thus brought to a size which Nature never intended for them.

It is true that this preternatural fat is very nice, and that this infernal skill gives them that delicacy and juiciness which make them to be the chief dishes of our best tables.

Thus improved, poultry is for the cook what canvas is for a painter, and the cap of Fortunatus for conjurors. It is served up boiled, roasted, fried, hot or cold, whole or in parts, with or without sauce, boned, grilled, stuffed, and always with the same success.

Three districts of ancient France rival for the honour of furnishing the finest poultry: Caux, le Mans, and la Bresse.

As to capons, there is always some doubt; the one a man has his fork in always appearing the best. But as regards chickens, we prefer those of Bresse, which are called *poulardes fines*, and are as round as an apple. It is a great pity

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that they are so rare in Paris, where they only arrive as occasional presents.

§ IV. THE TURKEY

35. The turkey is certainly one of the most beautiful presents which the New World has made to the Old.

Those who always desire to be better informed than others, say that the turkey was known to the Romans, that it was served up at the wedding-feast of Charlemagne, and that therefore it is an error to attribute this savoury importation to the Jesuits.

To meet these paradoxes two objections may be made:

1°. That in French the name of the bird, *Coq d'Inde* or *Dindon*, proves its origin, because at one time America was called the "West Indies."

2°. The shape of the bird is evidently quite foreign. No man able to judge could make a mistake in this.

But although I am already perfectly satisfied, I have made on this matter rather considerable researches, which I shall not inflict on my readers, but of which I shall only give the results:

1°. The turkey first appeared in Europe towards the end of the seventeenth century.

2°. It was imported by the Jesuits, who reared a large number especially on a farm which they possessed near Bourges.

3°. They spread thence gradually over the whole of France, which is the reason that in many places, and in familiar speech, a turkey was formerly, and is to this day, called "a Jesuit."

4°. Only in America has the turkey been found in a wild state, and in a state of nature; — it does not exist in Africa.

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5°. In the farms of North America, where the turkey is very common, it is got either from eggs which have been found and hatched, or from young birds caught in the woods and tamed. The consequence is, that they are more like a wild turkey, and preserve their original plumage.

Convinced by these arguments, I owe to the good fathers a double debt of gratitude, for they also imported the chin-chona, which is called in English "Jesuits' bark."

The same researches taught me that the turkey is gradually becoming acclimatised in France. Well-informed observers have told me that towards the middle of the last century, out of twenty turkeys that were hatched, scarcely ten lived to maturity, while now, all things being equal, out of twenty fifteen are reared. Storms of rain are especially fatal to them; large drops of rain driven onward by the wind and striking their tender and undefended heads destroy them.

Turkey-Lovers

36. The turkey is the largest, and, if not the finest, at least the most savoury of our domestic birds.

It enjoys, moreover, the unique advantage of uniting around it all classes of society.

When our vine-dressers and our farmers wish to regale themselves in the long winter evenings, what do we see roasting at the brilliant fire of the kitchen where the table is spread? A turkey.

When a useful mechanic, when a laborious artist, assembles a few friends to enjoy some relaxation, which is the more prized because it is so rare, what is the dish which, as a matter of course, he sets before them? A turkey stuffed with sausages or Lyons chestnuts.

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And in our most gastronomical circles, in those select companies where politics is forced to give way to dissertations on taste, what is expected, what is desired, what is always seen at the second course? A truffled turkey. A truffled turkey! . . . And my "Secret Memoirs" tell me that its restorative juices have more than once lighted up most diplomatic faces.

Influence of the Turkey on the Money-Market

37. The importation of turkeys has become the cause of an important increase to the public revenue, and gives rise to a pretty considerable trade.

By means of the rearing of turkeys, the farmers get more easily the money for their rent, the young girls often save up a sufficient dowry, and the townsmen who wish to feast on their foreign flesh have to pay round prices.

From a purely financial point of view, truffled turkeys demand particular attention.

I have reason to believe that in Paris alone, from the beginning of November to the end of February, three hundred truffled turkeys are daily consumed, which makes a total of thirty-six thousand turkeys.

The price of such a turkey is at least twenty francs, so that for the whole is paid no less than 720,000 francs, which is a very fair sum to put in circulation. To that a similar sum should be added for chickens and poultry, pheasants or partridges, similarly truffled, which are to be seen every day displayed in the provision shops, torturing every looker-on who finds himself too short of cash to get hold of them.

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An Exploit of the Professor

38. During my stay at Hartford, in Connecticut, I had the good fortune to kill a wild turkey. This exploit deserves to be transmitted to posterity, and I shall narrate it all the more complacently as I am the hero myself.

An old American farmer had invited me to come and have some shooting; he lived in the backwoods, promised me partridges, grey squirrels, wild turkeys, and told me to bring a friend or two with me if I pleased.

Accordingly, one fine day in October, 1794, Mr. King and I set out, mounted on two hacks, with the hope of arriving towards the evening at the farm of Mr. Bulow, situate about five mortal leagues from Hartford, in Connecticut.

Mr. King was a sportsman of a peculiar kind. He was passionately fond of this exercise; but as soon as he had killed a piece of game, he looked upon himself as a murderer, making on the fate of the defunct moral reflections and elegiacs which, however, did not prevent him from beginning again.

Although the road was a mere track, we arrived there without accident, and we were received with that cordial and unobtrusive hospitality which is shown by acts; in a few seconds every one of us, men, horses, and dogs, were examined, caressed, and lodged, according to their respective requirements.

About two hours were spent in looking over the farm and its dependencies. I should willingly describe it all, but I prefer to show the reader the four buxom daughters of Mr. Bulow, for whom our arrival was a great event.

Their age was from sixteen to twenty; they were radiant with freshness and health, and they were altogether so

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simple, lithe, and easy, that the most ordinary action seemed to lend them a thousand charms.

Soon after returning from our walk, we sat down around a table abundantly supplied. There was a superb piece of corned beef, a stewed goose, and a magnificent leg of mutton, with vegetables of every description, and at each end of the table two large jugs of cider, of which I never tired drinking.

When we had proven to our host that we were genuine sportsmen, at least by our appetite, he occupied himself with the object of our journey; he indicated as best he could the places to find game, the landmarks that might guide us on our way back, and, above all, the farms where we might find something to refresh us.

During this conversation, the ladies had made some excellent tea, of which we drank several cups; we were then shown to a double-bedded room, where exercise and fatigue gave us a sound sleep.

The next day we went shooting a little late, and having arrived at the end of the clearings made by Mr. Bulow, I found myself for the first time in a virgin forest, where the sound of the axe had never been heard.

I walked about with delight, observing the good and the ravages wrought by Time, the creator and destroyer, and I amused myself with following out all the phases of an oak's existence, from the moment when it springs out of the earth with two leaves, to that when nothing more remains of it than a long black line, which is the dust of its heart.

Mr. King scolded me for my absence of mind, and we commenced our sport. We killed at first some of those pretty little grey partridges that are so plump and so tender; we knocked over afterwards six or seven grey squirrels,

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which are thought of much in these parts; and finally, our lucky star brought us into the middle of a flock of turkeys.

They rose one after another at short intervals, flying noisily and rapidly, and screaming loudly. Mr. King fired on the first and ran after it. The others were out of shot; finally, the most lazy rose at ten paces from me. It passed through a break in the wood; I fired, and it fell dead.

A sportsman alone can conceive my extreme delight at such a good shot. I picked up the noble bird, and turned it over on every side for a quarter of an hour, when I heard Mr. King calling to me. I ran to him, and found that he had only called me to aid him in finding a turkey which he declared he had killed, and which nevertheless had disappeared.

I put my dog on the scent, but he led us into thickets so thick and thorny that a snake could hardly have penetrated them; it was therefore necessary to abandon the search, which put my comrade in a fit of bad temper that lasted till we returned.

The rest of our sport is scarcely worthy of record. On our way back we lost ourselves in these infinite woods, and ran great risk of passing the night there, had it not been for the silvery tones of Mr. Bulow's daughters, and the deep bass voice of their father, who had come to meet us, and aided us to get out of our difficulty.

The four sisters were fully equipped with fresh dresses, new sashes, pretty hats, and dainty boots, and it was evident that they had taken some pains on our account. I had, for my part, the intention of making myself agreeable to one of the young ladies, who took my arm as naturally as if she had been my wife.

On arriving at the farm, we found the supper served,

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but before attacking it, we sat down for a few minutes before a blazing and cheerful fire which had been lighted for us, although the weather did not require this precaution. We found it very comfortable, and were refreshed as if by enchantment.

This custom is undoubtedly derived from the Indians, who have always a fire in their wigwams. Perhaps it may be a tradition from St. Francis de Sales, who used to say that a fire is good during twelve months of the year; an opinion to which I do not subscribe.

We ate like starving men; an ample bowl of punch was brought to enable us to finish the evening, and the conversation of our host, who talked more ingenuously than on the previous evening, led us far into the night.

We spoke of the War of Independence, in which Mr. Bulow had served as a superior officer; of M. de La Fayette, whose memory every day becomes dearer to the Americans, who always speak of him as "the Marquis"; of agriculture, which at that time was enriching the United States, and finally of my own dear France, which I loved all the more from being obliged to quit it.

During the intervals of conversation, Mr. Bulow would from time to time ask his eldest daughter, Maria, to give us a song. And she sang us without being pressed, and with a charming hesitation, the national air, "Yankee Doodle," the "Lament of Queen Mary," and one on Major André, which are all very popular in that country. Maria had taken some lessons in singing, and in this solitary place was considered quite a "cantatrice"; but the great merit of her song was, above all, the quality of her voice, which was at the same time sweet, fresh, and unaffected.

Next day we went away, though urged to stay, but I

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could not, as I had also duties to fulfil in America. As they were getting the horses ready, Mr. Bulow took me aside, and said the following remarkable words: —

“You behold in me, my dear sir, a happy man, if there is one on earth; everything you see around you, and what you have seen at my house, is produced on my farm. These stockings have been knitted by my daughters; my shoes and my clothes come from my herds; they, with my garden and my farmyard, supply me with plain and substantial food. The greatest praise of our government is that in Connecticut there are thousands of farmers quite as content as myself, and whose doors, like mine, are never locked.

“Taxes here scarcely amount to anything, and, as long as they are paid, we can sleep calmly. Congress favours in every possible way our rising industry; agents from every quarter are always ready to rid us of all that we have to sell; and I have ready-money in hand for a long time, having just sold at twenty-four dollars the barrel of flour for which I usually get but eight.

“All this is due to the liberty we have won by arms and established on good laws. I am master in my own house, and you will not be astonished to know that the sound of the drum is never heard there, and that, unless on the 4th of July, the glorious anniversary of our independence, we never see either soldiers, or uniforms, or bayonets.”

During the whole time of our return-journey I was absorbed in deep reflection. Perhaps it may be thought that I was meditating on the last allocution of Mr. Bulow; but I was thinking on something quite different, namely, how I should get my turkey cooked. I felt quite embarrassed, being afraid that I should not find at Hartford all that I could have desired, because I wished to raise a

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trophy to my skill in displaying my *spolia opima* to advantage.

I make a painful sacrifice in suppressing the details of the great work of which the purpose was to give a dinner in good style, to which I had invited several American friends. Suffice it to say, that the wings of the partridge were served *en papillotte*, and that the grey squirrels were stewed in Madeira.

As for the turkey, which was the only roast we had, it was charming to look upon, delightful to smell, and delicious to taste; and so, until the last morsel was eaten, you could hear all around the table, "Very good! exceedingly good!" "Oh, my dear sir, what a glorious bit." ¹

§ V. ON GAME

39. We understand by game those animals good to eat which live free in the woods and fields in a state of nature.

We say "good to eat," because some of these animals are not considered game, such as foxes, badgers, ravens, magpies, owls, and others. They are called in French *bêtes puantes*.

We classify game in three divisions.

The first begins at the thrush, and goes down to all birds of smaller size.

The second commences with the corn-crake, the wood-

¹ The flesh of the wild turkey has more colour and more flavour than that of the domestic turkey.

I have heard with pleasure that my estimable colleague, M. Bosc, has shot some in Carolina, which he found excellent, and, above all, much finer than those we rear in Europe. He recommends, therefore, that all turkeys that are reared should have as much liberty as possible, that they should be taken out into the fields, and even into the woods, to increase their flavour, and to bring them as much as possible nearer to the original species ("Annales d'Agriculture," part of 28th February 1821).

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cock, the partridge, the pheasant, the rabbit, and the hare; it is game properly so-called; on lands or marshes, game with down or feathers.

The third is better known under the name of venison, and comprises the wild boar, roebuck, and all other cloven-footed animals.

Game is one of the luxuries of the dinner-table; it is a food healthy, heating, savoury, tasty, and easy of digestion to young stomachs.

But these qualities are not so intrinsic as to be in a great measure independent of the skill of the cook. If we throw into a pot of water salt and a piece of beef, we will obtain some soup and some boiled meat. But if instead of beef we put wild boar or venison in the pot, we will have but poor fare; in this respect, butcher's meat has the advantage.

Under the directions of a skilful cook, however, game undergoes a great number of scientific modifications and transformations, furnishing the majority of the highly flavoured dishes on which a transcendental gastronomic art is based.

Game also owes much of its quality to the nature of the soil it is fed on. The taste of a red partridge of Perigord is not the same as that of a red partridge of Sologne; and although a hare killed in the neighbourhood of Paris is but a poor dish, a leveret from the sunburnt slopes of Val-romey or Upper Dauphiné is perhaps the finest flavoured of all quadrupeds.

Among the small birds, the first in order of excellence is, without doubt, the beccafico or fig-pecker.

He becomes quite as fat as the redbreast or the ortolan, and Nature has, moreover, endowed him with a slight bitter

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taste and a unique flavour so exquisite that, when they are eaten, all the organs of taste are brought into play, fully occupied, and wholly beatified. If a beccafico were of the size of a pheasant, it would certainly cost as much as an acre of land.

It is a pity that this privileged bird is seen so rarely in Paris; a few certainly do arrive, but they are lacking in the fat which is their chief merit; they scarcely resemble those of the departments of the east or of the south of France.¹

Few people know how to eat small birds. The following is the proper method, such as it has been confidentially entrusted to me by Canon Charcot, a professional *gourmand*, and a perfect gastronome, thirty years before the word was known.

Take the plump little bird by the beak, sprinkle over him a little salt, take out the gullet, pop him skilfully in your mouth, bite him off close to the fingers, and chew it with might and main: you will have enough juice to flood the whole organ, and you will taste a pleasure unknown to the vulgar.

Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo. — HORACE.

¹ At Belley, in my youth, I have heard people speak of the Jesuit Father Fabri, who was born in this diocese, and of his special predilection for beccaficoes.

As soon as they were cried in the streets, people would say, "There are the beccaficoes, Father Fabri is coming presently." And sure enough he never failed to arrive with a friend on the 1st September; they fed on these birds as long as they remained, for every one was delighted to invite them, and they went away about the 25th.

As long as he was in France, he never omitted to make this ornithophilic voyage, which was only interrupted when he was sent to Rome, where he died as Penitentiary in 1788.

Father Honoré Fabri was a man of great knowledge, and wrote several works of theology and physics; in one of them he attempted to prove that he had discovered the circulation of the blood before, or at least as soon as Harvey.

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The quail is, amongst game properly so-called, the smallest and the most agreeable. A very plump quail pleases as much by his taste as by his shape and his colour. It is very ignorant to serve it up in any other way than roasted or *en papillotte*, because its flavour is very evanescent, and because every time the animal comes in contact with any liquid, it dissolves, evaporates, and disappears.

The woodcock is also a bird to be held in high esteem, but very few people know all its good points. A woodcock is in all its glory when it has been cooked under the eye of the sportsman, and, above all, of the sportsman who has killed it. Then the roasted bird is in perfection, according to all rules and regulations, and the mouth is flooded with delight.

Above the preceding, and indeed, above all others, must be placed the pheasant, but only few mortals know how to serve it up to perfection.

A pheasant eaten a week after being killed is not as good as a partridge or a fowl, for his merit consists in his aroma.

Science has taken into consideration the merit of this aroma, experience has used it, and a pheasant ready for the spit is a morsel worthy of the greatest connoisseur among *gourmands*.

In the "Varieties" I shall show how to roast a pheasant *à la sainte alliance*, for the moment has now come when this method, hitherto confined to a small circle of friends, shall be made known far and wide for the happiness of mankind.

A pheasant with truffles is not so good as one would imagine it to be. The bird is too dry to flavour the tuber, and, moreover, the gamy odour of the one and the perfume of the other neutralise each other by their combination, and are not suited to one another.

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§ VI. OF FISH

40. Some men of learning, but not very orthodox, have maintained that the ocean was the common cradle of every living thing, that even the human race was born in the sea, and that it only owes its present state to the influence of the air and to the habits which it has been obliged to adopt in order to dwell in this new element.

However this may be, it is at least certain that the empire of waters contains an immense number of beings of all forms and all dimensions, with vital qualities in very different proportions, and according to ways which differ from those of warm-blooded animals.

It is not less true that at all times and everywhere, an enormous mass of food is to be found in it; and that in the present state of science a most agreeable variety is introduced on our dinner-tables.

Fish, being less nourishing than meat, and more succulent than vegetables, forms a "middle-term" which suits nearly all temperaments, and may be permitted even to convalescents.

The Greeks and the Romans, although not so advanced as ourselves in the art of preparing fish, held them, nevertheless, in great esteem, and pushed their refinement to such a point that they were able to tell, by tasting it, in what water it had been caught.

They kept their fish in fish-ponds; and the cruelty of Vadius Pollio has come down to us, who fed his lampreys with the bodies of slaves he had ordered to be slain for the purpose, a cruelty which the Emperor Domitian highly blamed, but which he should have punished.

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A great discussion has been raised as to which is the best fish — sea fish or fresh-water fish.

The question will probably never be decided, for, according to the Spanish proverb: "On matters of taste there can be no dispute." Every one feels in his own way; those fugitive sensations cannot be expressed by any known character; and there is no standard by which to compare a codfish, a sole, or a turbot, with a salmon-trout, a first-class pike, or even a tench of six or seven pounds.

It is agreed on all hands that fish is much less nutritious than meat, either because it does not contain osmazome, or because, being lighter in weight, it is less substantial than the same bulk of meat. Shell-fish, especially oysters, furnish little nourishing substance; this is the reason why so many can be eaten without spoiling the appetite for a dinner which follows immediately.

We remember that in former times a dinner of any importance used to begin with oysters, and that there was always a good number of guests who did not stop until they had swallowed a gross (12 dozen = 144). I was anxious to know what was the weight of this advance guard, and I ascertained that a dozen of oysters, including water, weigh four ounces, which gives for the gross 3 lbs. Now it is certain that the same persons did not eat a less quantity on account of the oysters they had swallowed; but that they would have completely satisfied their appetites if they had eaten the same quantity of meat, or even of chicken.

Anecdote

In 1798, I was at Versailles as a Commissary of the Directory, and I had frequently to meet the registrar, M. Laporte, of the tribunal department. He was very fond

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of oysters, and used to complain that he never had eaten enough of them, or, as he said, "that he never had had a good bellyful."

I resolved to procure him this satisfaction, and for this purpose I invited him a day beforehand to dine with me.

He came; I kept up with him till the third dozen, after which I let him go on by himself. He went on till the thirty-second dozen, that is to say, for more than an hour, as the maid who opened them was not very skilful.

As in the meantime I had nothing to do — at table this is really unbearable — I stopped my guest whilst in full career, and said: "My dear fellow, it is your destiny not to eat to-day your 'good bellyful' of oysters; let us now have some dinner." We did so, and he behaved as vigorously as a man who had been fasting.

Muria. Garum

41. The ancients made from fish two condiments of the highest flavour, *muria* and *garum*.

The former was nothing but the brine of the tunny, or, to speak more exactly, the liquid which the mixture of salt caused to flow from the fish.

Garum, which was dearer, is not so well known to us. We are told that it was extracted by pressure from the salted intestines of the scomber or mackerel; but this supposition leaves its high price unexplained. It seems likely that it was a foreign sauce; and perhaps it was nothing else than the "soy" which we get from India, and which we know to be got by the fermentation of a mixture of fish and mushrooms.

Certain races, by their position, have been obliged to live almost entirely on fish; they also feed on it their beasts of burden, which from custom are satisfied with this ab-

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normal food; they also manure the soil with it; and nevertheless the sea that surrounds them does not cease to yield always the same quantity.

It has been remarked that those races are less courageous than those which are fed on flesh; they are pale, which is not surprising, as the elements of which fish is composed must augment the lymph more than replenish the blood.

Among ichthyophagi, many examples of longevity have also been observed, either because a food which is unsubstantial and very light saves them from the inconveniences of fulness of blood, or because the juices it contains being only destined by Nature to form bones and cartilages which last never very long, the habitual use of it retards for a few years the solidification of all parts of the body, which is finally the necessary cause of natural death.

However this may be, fish, under skilful hands, may become an inexhaustible resource of gustatory enjoyments. It is served up entire, sliced in pieces; done in water, in oil, in wine, hot or cold, and is always well received; but it never deserves a warmer welcome than when it is brought up *en matelotte*.

This stew, though of necessity a dish often eaten by the sailors on our rivers, and made in perfection only by the inn-keepers on the banks of such rivers, owes to them, nevertheless, a delicacy which is unsurpassed. Those who love fish never see it appear without expressing the highest delight, either because of the freshness of its taste, or because it combines several good qualities, or because it may be eaten almost in unlimited quantities without fear either of satiety or of indigestion.

Analytic gastronomy has attempted to ascertain what are the effects of a fish diet on the animal economy, and

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unanimous observations have demonstrated that it acts strongly on the genetic sense, and awakes in both sexes the instincts of reproduction.

This result being once known, two immediate causes were assigned to it which anybody can understand.

1°. Various manners of preparing the fish, of which the condiments are obviously irritating, such as caviar, red herrings, pickled tunny, salt codfish, stock-fish, and some others.

2°. The various juices imbibed by the fish, which are highly inflammable, and oxygenate and turn sour during the progress of digestion.

A more careful analysis had discovered a third and more active cause, which is the presence of phosphorus, which is found in the roes, and always shows itself when fish is in a state of decomposition.

These physical truths were undoubtedly unknown to those ecclesiastical law-givers, who imposed a Lenten diet on different communities of monks, such as the Carthusians, the Franciscans, the Trappists, and the barefooted Carmelites, as reformed by Santa Theresa. For it cannot be supposed that they wished to render yet more difficult the observance of the vow of chastity, already so anti-social.

Beyond doubt, in this state of affairs, glorious victories have been won, and rebellious senses have been conquered; but there were also many lapses and defeats! These latter must have been well authenticated, for they gave to certain religious orders a reputation like that of Hercules amongst the Danaids, or that of Marshal Saxe with Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

Moreover, they might have been enlightened by an

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anecdote pretty old, as it has come to us from the Crusades.

The Sultan Saladin, wishing to try how great could be the continence of some dervishes, took two of them into his palace, and fed them with the most nourishing food for a certain time.

Soon all traces disappeared of the severity which they had exercised on themselves, and they began to get fat. Two odalisks of great beauty were then given to them as their companions, but they failed in their best directed attacks, and the two saints came out of so delicate an ordeal as pure as the diamond from Visapoor.

The Sultan kept them for some time longer in his palace, and, to celebrate their triumph, he fed them for several weeks on fish as well cooked. After a few days, they were again submitted to the united power of youth and beauty; but this time Nature was the most powerful, and the too happy anchorites fell . . . in a surprising manner.

In the present state of our knowledge, it is probable that if at any future time monastic orders were to be revived, the superiors would adopt some manner of living more favourable to the accomplishment of their duties.

Philosophical Reflection

42. Fish, to indicate by this term all species considered as one whole, is for the philosopher an inexhaustible source of meditation and surprise.

The varied forms of these strange animals, the senses of which they are deprived, and the limited character of those they have, their various modes of existence, the influence which must be exercised over them by the difference of the medium wherein they are destined to live,

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breathe, and move, extend the range of our ideas and the indefinite modifications which may result from matter, motion, and life.

As for myself, I feel for these creatures a sentiment akin to respect, springing from a deep conviction that they are evidently antediluvian animals, because the great cataclysm which drowned our ancestors about the eighteenth century of the world's history was for the fishes nothing but a time of joy, conquest, and festivity.

§ VII. OF TRUFFLES

43. Whoever says truffle, utters a grand word, which awakens erotic and gastronomic ideas both in the sex wearing petticoats and in the bearded portion of humanity.

This honour of awaking two ideas results from the fact that this eminent tubercle is not only delicious to the taste, but also because we think that it excites a power of which the exercise is accompanied by the most delicious pleasures.

The origin of the truffle is unknown; it is found, but we do not know how it is produced, or how it grows. Men of the greatest skill have studied this question; some thought they had discovered the seed, and thus could multiply the truffle at will. Useless efforts and deceitful promises! This planting produced no crop. This is perhaps not a great misfortune, for, as truffles are often sold at fancy prices, perhaps they would be less thought of if they were to be got in quantities and at a cheaper rate.

"Rejoice, dear friend," said I one day to Madame de Ville-Plaine, "an invention for making lace has just been brought before the Society for the Encouragement of Science, whereby the most magnificent lace will be made at a cheap price, and sold for almost nothing." "Really!"

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replied my fair friend, with a look of sovereign indifference, "if lace were so cheap, do you think any one would wear such ragged-looking things."

Erotic Virtue of Truffles

44. The Romans were acquainted with the truffle, but it does not appear that they knew the French kind. Those which they delighted in came from Greece, Africa, and principally from Lybia; they were white or reddish, and the truffles of Lybia were the most sought after, as they were more delicate and had more flavour.

Gustus alimenta per omnia quærunt. — JUVENAL.

From the Romans to our time there has been a long interregnum, and the resurrection of truffles is an event of recent occurrence; for I have read many old pharmacopœias that do not mention them. We may even say that the present generation has beheld this resurrection.

Towards 1780, truffles were rare in Paris, and they were only to be had in small quantities at the Hôtel des Américains and at the Hôtel de Provence. A truffled turkey was an object of luxury which was only seen at the dinner-table of the greatest lords, or at that of kept women.

We owe their abundance to the provision dealers, of whom the number has much increased, and who, seeing that the truffles were becoming popular, had them sought for all over the kingdom. They paid well for them, and as they were despatched by the mail and by couriers, everybody went to search for them; for, as truffles cannot be planted, careful search alone can increase their consumption.

At the time I write (1825), the glory of the truffle has now reached its culmination. Who would dare to say that he

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has been at a dinner where there was not a *pièce truffée*. However good an *entrée* may be, it should always be accompanied by truffles to set it off to advantage.

Who has not felt his mouth water in hearing truffles à la *provençale* spoken of?

A *sauté* of truffles is the dish reserved for the mistress of the house to do the honours. In fine, the truffle is the very diamond of gastronomy.

I have looked for the reason of this preference, as it appears to me that many other substances had an equal right to this honour, and I think the reason is, because it is generally believed that the truffle excites the genetic sense. Moreover, I have convinced myself that the greater part of our perfections, of our predilections, and of our admirations, are derived from the same cause: so powerful and general is the bondage in which this tyrannical and capricious sense holds us!

This discovery led me to wish to know if the supposed influence of the truffle was real, and if this opinion was founded on reality.

Such an inquiry is no doubt ticklish, and may make waggish people smile; but "*Honi soit qui mal y pense!*" No truth should be hidden.

I at first addressed myself to the ladies, because they are clear-sighted, and possess delicate tact; but I soon observed that I ought to have commenced this inquiry forty years earlier, for I merely received ironical or evasive replies. One only was sincere, and she shall tell her own tale. She was a very clever woman, without any pretensions, virtuous without prudishness, and for whom love was nothing more than a pleasant recollection.

"Sir," she said to me, "at a time when people were still

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eating suppers, I supped one day at home with my husband and one of his friends, whose name was Verseuil, a handsome fellow, rather witty, and who often came to our house. But he had never told me anything that could make me think that he was in love with me, and if he paid me any attentions it was in such a delicate manner that only a silly woman could have taken offence at it. He appeared that day to be doomed to keep me company for the rest of the evening, for my husband had a business appointment, and was obliged to leave us early. The principal dish of our supper, sufficiently light in other respects, was nevertheless a magnificent truffled fowl. Some official at Périgueux had sent it to us, and at that time it was a present; and as you know where it came from, you can very well imagine that it was a beauty. The truffles above all were delicious, and you know that I am very fond of them. Nevertheless, I did not eat too much of them. I only drank one solitary glass of champagne, for I had a sort of feminine presentiment that the evening would not pass over without something happening. My husband went away early, and left me alone with Verseuil, whom he looked upon as one of our own. The conversation turned at first on indifferent subjects, but it was not long before it took a more concise and more interesting turn. Verseuil became in succession flattering, unreserved, affectionate, caressing, and seeing that I only made fun of so many beautiful sayings, he became so pressing that I could no longer deceive myself as to his pretensions. I woke up then as if from a dream, and I defended myself so much the more strenuously as I felt no affection for him. He persisted with a gesture that might have become quite offensive, and I had some trouble in making him listen to reason. I admit to my shame that I

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only succeeded because I was artful enough to make him believe that all hope was not forbidden to him. Finally, he left me. I went to lie down, and slept like a top. But the next day I sat in judgment on myself. I examined my conduct of the evening before, and blamed myself. I ought to have stopped Verseuil as soon as he began to speak, and not have lent myself to a conversation that forebode nothing good. I should have taken offence earlier. I ought to have looked sternly at him, and should have rang the bell, raised my voice, made a noise, done in fact everything that I did not do. Need I say anything more, sir? I blame the truffles for this. I am really persuaded that they were the cause of some predisposition, which might have become dangerous; and if I still eat them — for to abstain wholly from them would have been too severe a punishment — at least I never eat any more of them without being a little careful in the midst of my enjoyment.”

However frank such a confession may be, it can never be accepted as applying to every one. I, therefore, looked for further information. I consulted men in whom professionally great confidence is placed; they formed with me a committee, a tribunal, a senate, a sanhedrim, an areopagus, and we gave the following decision to be commented on by the literary men of the twenty-fifth century: —

“The truffle is not a positive aphrodisiac, but it may under certain circumstances render women more affectionate, and men more amiable.”

In Piedmont are to be found white truffles, which are highly esteemed. They have a slight garlic flavour that does not detract from their perfection, because it leaves no unpleasant after-taste.

The finest truffles of France come from Périgord and from

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Upper Provence; and it is about the month of January that they are in full flavour.

Some truffles are also found at Bugey of a very fine quality, but they do not keep well. I made four attempts to get some for a few of my friends on the banks of the Seine, but only one was successful, and then they enjoyed them very much, and saw the merit of a difficulty overcome.

The truffles of Burgundy and Dauphiné are of inferior quality. They are hard, and deficient in flavour. So there are truffes and truffles, as there are "faggots and faggots."¹

To find the truffles trained dogs and hogs are generally used, but there are men whose eye is so practised, that in looking over a piece of ground they can tell to a certainty whether it contains truffes, and what their size and quality will be.

Are Truffles Indigestible?

It only remains for us to examine if truffes are indigestible.

We deny it.

This official decision is without appeal, and is based:

1°. On the nature of the object examined. The truffe is easy to chew, light in weight, and is neither hard nor leathery.

2°. On our personal observations, extending over a period of more than fifty years. During all this time we have never seen any eater of truffes suffer from indigestion.

3°. On the certificates of the most celebrated physicians

¹ In Molière's *Le Médecin Malgré lui* (act i., sc. 6), Sganarelle wants to show that his faggots are better than those of any other person, and exclaims, "Il y a fagots et fagots." — TR.

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of Paris, a city to be admired for its many *gourmands*, who are especially fond of truffles.

4°. On the daily practice of these self-same doctors, who, all things being equal, consume more truffles than any other class of persons. For example, Dr. Malouet used to swallow enough to give an indigestion to an elephant; yet nevertheless he lived till eighty-six.

We may therefore regard as certain that truffles are both wholesome and agreeable, and, when taken in moderation, are easily digested.

A man can become indisposed after a heavy dinner, where, among other things, truffles have been eaten; but such accidents only happen to those who, having stuffed themselves too much during the first course, cram in still more at the second course, and allow none of the good things to pass by which are offered them.

Thus, it is not the fault of the truffles; and one may be sure such people would have been worse if, under similar circumstances, they had swallowed, instead of truffles, the same quantity of potatoes.

Let us conclude with an anecdote that will show how easy it is to be deceived when one does not observe anything carefully.

One day I had invited M. Simonard to dine with me; he was a very agreeable old man, and a first-rate gastronome. I knew his taste, and, to prove to all my guests that I wished them to enjoy themselves, I did not spare the truffles, so they appeared most carefully stuffed in a young hen-turkey.

M. Simonard ate heartily; and as I knew that up to that time he had not died of eating truffles, I left him alone, and only told him not to hurry himself, as nobody wished to infringe on the property he had acquired.

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Everything passed off very well, and the company went away rather late; but when M. Simonard got home, he was seized with a violent pain in the stomach, felt inclined to discharge his food, coughed violently, and was in general very uncomfortable.

This condition lasted some time, and produced some anxiety; everybody already believed that he suffered from an indigestion caused by the truffles, when nature came to the assistance of the patient. M. Simonard opened his big mouth, and eructated with a tremendous effort a large bit of truffle, which struck the wall and rebounded with force, not without danger to those who were taking care of him.

At the very moment all unpleasant symptoms disappeared; tranquillity was restored, the digestive powers acted again, the patient went to sleep, and awoke the next morning perfectly well and without bearing me any grudge.

The cause of the mischief was soon found out. M. Simonard had been eating for many years, so his teeth could no longer do the work which they ought to have done, for several of them were gone, and the remaining ones were not as firm as he could have wished them to be.

In such a state of things, one truffle had not been masticated, and had almost whole gone down into the stomach; the action of digestion had carried it towards the pylorus, where it had momentarily stuck; this mechanical detention had caused all the mischief, and expulsion cured it.

Thus, there had never been any indigestion, but merely the interposition of a foreign body.

This was decided on by the consulting committee, which saw the *corpus delicti*, and selected me as its reporter.

M. Simonard, nevertheless, is not a whit less fond of

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truffles; he still attacks them with the same boldness, but takes care to masticate them more carefully and to take heed to swallow them; and he thanks Heaven, from the bottom of his heart, that this salutary precaution procures him a prolongation of enjoyment.

§ VIII. SUGAR

45. In the present state of science we understand by "sugar" a substance sweet to the taste, which can be crystallised, and by fermentation yields carbonic acid and alcohol.

Formerly we understood by "sugar" the thickened and crystallised juice of the cane (*Arundo saccharifera*).

This cane came from the Indies; nevertheless, it is certain that the Romans did not know sugar as a common substance, and could not crystallise it.

Some passages in ancient writers may well lead us to believe that it had been observed that from some reeds a sweet juice could be extracted. Thus Lucan says:

Quique bibunt tenerâ dulces ab arundine succos.

But between a sugar extracted from such canes and the sugar of modern times there is a great difference; and in Rome science was not yet sufficiently advanced to manufacture the latter. It is in the colonies of the New World that sugar really originated. The sugar-cane was imported there about two centuries ago, and prospered. The sweet juice that flows from it was made use of, and after various attempts people succeeded in extracting from it cane-juice, molasses, raw sugar, loaf sugar, and refined sugar of various qualities.

The culture of the sugar-cane has become an object of

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the highest importance, for it is a source of riches both for those who cultivate it, for those who deal in its produce, for those who retail it, and finally for those governments who tax it.

Indigenous Sugar

For a long while it was believed that a tropical heat was required to grow sugar. But about 1740, Margraff¹ discovered it in some plants of the temperate zone, and, amongst others, in the beet-root. The truth of this discovery was clearly demonstrated by the experiments made at Berlin by Professor Achard.²

At the commencement of the nineteenth century, circumstances having rendered sugar rare in France, and consequently very expensive, the government encouraged scientific investigation into its manufacture.

This encouragement met with abundant success; for it became certain that sugar was widely dispersed throughout the vegetable kingdom; it was found in the grape, the chestnut, the potato, and especially in the beet-root.

This last-mentioned plant was now extensively cultivated, and a mass of experiments were made which prove that the Old World, so far as sugar is concerned, might do without the New World. France became covered with manufactories, which worked with various success. Sugar-making became naturalised; and a new art was called into existence, which may some day become again useful to us.

Among the various sugar manufactories, the most prominent was that established at Passy, near Paris, by M. Ben-

¹ Margraff (1709-1782), a celebrated German chemist, born at Berlin, who wrote nearly all his works in French. — TR.

² Achard (1754-1821) was another well-known German chemist, who, though of French extraction, was also born at Berlin. — TR.

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jamin Delessert, a respectable citizen, whose name is always connected with everything that is good and useful.¹

In consequence of many well conducted experiments, he succeeded in freeing the manufactory of sugar from any uncertainty, made no secret of his discoveries even to those who might have been tempted to become his rivals, received the visit of the head of the government, and became manufacturer to the Court at the Tuileries.

The course of events, the Restoration and Peace,² having reduced colonial sugar to a very low price, the manufacturers of beet-root sugar lost the greater part of their advantages. There are nevertheless still a few who prosper; and M. Benjamin Delessert produces every year some thousands of pounds, on which he does not lose, and which furnish him with an opportunity for preserving the art of making it, to which at a future time it may be useful to have recourse.³

When beet-root sugar was in the market, some men who

¹ Baron Benjamin Delessert (1773-1847) was one of the originators of the savings banks in France, and took a great interest in the welfare of the working classes. — TR.

² This refers probably to the Treaty of Peace, signed May 13, 1814, between England, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. — TR.

³ At the general meeting of the "Society for the Encouragement of National Industry," a gold medal was given to M. Crespel, a manufacturer at Arras, who makes each year more than 150,000 beet-root sugar loaves, which he sells at a profit, even when cane sugar is as low as two francs twenty centimes the kilogramme. This may be accounted for by the fact that the refuse is sold for distillation, and subsequently used as food for cattle. — BRILLAT SAVARIN. The *Physiologie du Gout* was first published in 1826, when beet-root sugar was yet in its infancy. At present (1884) the French and other foreign governments pay their sugar-manufacturers an export-bounty, to enable them to compete with colonial-grown sugar, so that people in England buy beet-root sugar at threepence a pound, which is much cheaper than they could get it in foreign countries. — TR.

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had made up their minds, some men of routine, and some silly fellows, thought it had an unpleasant taste, and a few even pretended that it was unhealthy.

Careful and oft-repeated experiments have proved the contrary, and Count Chaptal¹ has inserted their results in his excellent work, "Chemistry Applied to Agriculture," volume II, page 13 (1st edition).

"The sugars that are obtained from various plants," says this celebrated chemist, "are in fact all of the same nature, and are not different from one another if they are refined in the same manner. Taste, crystallisation, colour, specific gravity, are absolutely identical; and therefore we challenge any man, however experienced a judge or taster of these products, to distinguish between one another."

We have a striking example of the force of prejudice, and of the difficulty of establishing a fact, when we mention that out of a hundred British subjects taken indiscriminately, there are not ten who believe that sugar can be made from the beet-root.²

Various Uses of Sugar

Sugar was introduced to the world by the apothecaries. It must have played an important part with them, for if we wish to mention any one who is in need of something essential, we say of him, "He is like an apothecary without sugar."

It was sufficient for sugar to come from apothecaries' shops to be received with disfavour. Some said that it was

¹ Jean Chaptal (1756-1832), a celebrated French chemist, created a Count by Napoleon I, had been Director of Public Instruction for several years, when he was appointed Minister of the Interior, a post which he filled for more than four years. — Tr.

² This is no longer the case. See Translator's observation, page 82.

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heating, others that it injured the chest, and a few that it predisposed to apoplexy. But calumny was obliged to flee before truth, and for more than eighty years the following remarkable adage has been enunciated: "Sugar only hurts the purse."

Protected by this almost uncontrovertible aphorism, the use of sugar has become every day more common and more general, and no alimentary substance has undergone more combinations or more transformations.

Many persons like to eat sugar by itself, and in some cases, chiefly the more desperate ones, the medical faculty has prescribed it under this form, as a remedy that can do no harm, and is at least not repulsive.

Mixed with water, it gives *eau sucrée*, a refreshing, wholesome, and pleasant drink, and sometimes beneficial as a remedy.

Mixed in larger proportions with water, and concentrated by fire, it produces syrups which can be impregnated with all sorts of flavours, and which present at all times refreshing beverages, pleasing to everybody by their variety.

Mixed with water, from which the caloric has been extracted scientifically, it produces ices which are of Italian origin, and which seem to have been introduced in France by Catherine de Medici.

Mixed with wine, it forms a cordial, a restorative so well known that in some countries the toast that is taken to young married people the first night of their wedding is soaked in it, just as in Persia, on a similar occasion, they bring to the newly-wedded couple sheep's trotters in vinegar.

Mixed with flour and eggs, it gives biscuits, macaroons,

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cracknels, sponge-cakes, and a quantity of light pastry, which constitutes the not very ancient art of the pastry cook and confectioner.

Mixed with milk, it gives creams, blanchmanges, and other culinary preparations that form so agreeable a termination to the second course, by substituting for the substantial taste of the viands a flavour more refined and more ethereal.

Mixed with coffee, it develops the flavour.

Mixed with coffee and milk, it gives a light, agreeable food, easy to be obtained, and which is perfectly suited for those who leave the breakfast-table immediately to enter their study. Coffee with milk is also an especial favourite of the ladies, but the keen eye of science has discovered that its too frequent use might be hurtful to what they value most highly.

Mixed with fruits and the essence of flowers, it produces jams, marmalades, preserves, pastes, and candied fruits, a process which enables us to enjoy the flavour of these fruits and flowers long after the time Nature has fixed as their limit. Considered from this last point of view, sugar might perhaps be used with advantage in the art of embalming, which is as yet very little understood among us.

Finally, sugar mixed with alcohol, gives spirituous liqueurs, invented, it is said, to stimulate the old age of Louis XIV, and which, forcibly laying hold of the palate as well as of the organs of smell by the flavour added to them, form at the present time the most perfect enjoyments of taste.

The use of sugar is not limited to this alone. We may say that it is a universal condiment, and that it never spoils anything. Some use it with meat, some with vege-

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tables, and often with fruit. It is an essential element in the most fashionable drinks, such as punch, negus, syllabub, and others of foreign origin; and in its application it varies very much, as different nations and individuals modify it to suit their own tastes.

Such is this substance which was hardly known even by name to Frenchmen at the time of Louis XIII, and which has become an article of the first necessity for those of the nineteenth century; for there is no housewife, especially among those well to do, who does not spend more money in sugar than she does in bread.

M. Delacroix, an author whose works are as popular as they are numerous,¹ used to complain at Versailles about the price of sugar, which at that time cost more than five francs a pound. "Ah!" he would say, in his gentle and tender way, "if ever sugar should come to be sold at a shilling a pound, I would never drink water unless there was plenty of sugar in it." His prayers have been heard; he is still alive, and I trust he has kept his word.

§ IX. OF COFFEE

Origin of Coffee

46. The first coffee tree was found in Arabia, and, in spite of the various transplantations that this shrub has undergone, the best coffee still comes from there.

An ancient tradition states that coffee was discovered by a shepherd, who noticed that his flock was in a particular state of excitement and gaiety whenever they browsed on

¹ Jacques-Vincent Delacroix (1743-1832) was a voluminous author and a celebrated lawyer. He was the editor of the *Spectateur Français*, in which he defended Louis XVI, and attacked torture and many other legal abuses. He was for twenty-seven years a judge at the tribunal of Versailles. — Tr.

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the berries of the coffee tree. Whatever may be thought of this old legend, only half of the honour of the discovery belongs to the shrewd goat-herd; the other half unquestionably belongs to whoever first thought of roasting the coffee beans.

Indeed, a decoction of raw coffee is a very insignificant drink; but when it is carbonised, it develops an aroma and forms an oil which characterises coffee as we take it, and which would for ever and aye have remained unknown if heat had not been applied.

The Turks, who are our masters in this particular, do not employ a mill for grinding coffee, but they crush it in wooden mortars and pestles; and when these have been used for a long time they become costly, and are sold at a high price.

It was my duty, in virtue of my office, to find out if there was really any difference between the two methods, and which of the two was preferable.

Accordingly, I carefully roasted a pound of good Mocha; I divided it into two equal portions, of which one was ground, and the other crushed in the Turkish manner.

I made coffee with each of these powders. I took of each precisely the same quantity, poured upon it an equal quantity of boiling water, acting in everything exactly in the same way.

I tasted this coffee, and caused it also to be tasted by several bigwigs. The unanimous verdict was that the coffee beaten in a mortar was undoubtedly superior to that made of the ground bean.

Every one can repeat the experiment. Meanwhile, I shall give a very singular example of the influence that one way or another of treating a certain substance can produce.

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"Sir," said Napoleon one day to the Senator Laplace,¹ "how does it happen that a glass of water into which I melt a lump of loaf sugar seems much better than that into which I put the same quantity of crushed sugar?" "Sire," answered the man of science, "there are three substances of which the principles are exactly the same, namely, sugar, gum, and starch; they only differ in certain conditions, of which Nature reserves to herself the secret; I believe it to be possible that in the crushing with the pestle, some of the sugary particles may pass to a state of gum or of starch, and so cause the difference which exists in this case."

This remark has become publicly known, and further observations have confirmed the first impression.

Various Modes of making Coffee

Some years since every one directed his attention at the same time to the best manner of making coffee, which was due, almost unwittingly, to the fact that the head of the government, Napoleon I, took it in large quantities.

People proposed to make it without burning it, without reducing it to powder, to infuse it in cold water, to let it boil for three-quarters of an hour, to put it in a digester, and so forth.

I have made all these experiments in my time, as well as those that have been proposed to this day, and, having a thorough knowledge of the matter, I decide in favour of the method called *à la Dubelloy*, which consists in pouring boiling water on coffee placed in a porcelain or silver vase, pierced with very little holes. Then let this first decoction

¹ Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827), a celebrated mathematician and natural philosopher, made a count by Napoleon I, and a marquis and peer by the Restoration, was a man of great talent, but of a very servile character.

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be heated again almost to a boiling point, let it be strained anew, and then you'll have a coffee as clear and as good as it is possible to get.¹

I tried, among various other methods, to make coffee in a coffee-pot, with high pressure; but the result was a liquid full of extractive and bitter matters, good at the best to tickle the throat of a Cossack.

Effects of Coffee

Doctors have pronounced various opinions on the sanitary properties of coffee, and do not always agree with each other. We shall take no part in this contest, and only devote ourselves to that more important point — What is its influence on the organs of thought?

It is beyond doubt that coffee greatly excites the functions of the brain. Thus any one who drinks it for the first time is sure to be deprived of a part of his sleep.

Sometimes this effect is mitigated or modified by habit; but there are many individuals who never can take it without getting excited, and who consequently are obliged to give up drinking coffee.

I have said that this effect was mitigated by custom, but this does not prevent its being produced in another manner; for I have observed that persons who can take coffee with impunity and yet sleep during the night, are obliged to take it in order to keep awake during the day, and always fall asleep during the evening when they have not taken any after dinner.

There are several other persons who are sleepy all day if they do not take their habitual cup of coffee in the morning.

¹ If M. Brillat-Savarin were alive now, he would find another and better method for making coffee. — TR.

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Voltaire and Buffon drank a great deal of coffee; perhaps it is to this custom that we may ascribe the admirable lucidity which is found in the works of the former, as well as the harmony and enthusiasm which pervade the style of the latter. Several pages of the latter on man, on the dog, the tiger, the lion, and the horse, were evidently written in a state of extraordinary cerebral excitement.

The sleeplessness produced by coffee is not painful: one has very clear mental perceptions, and no desire for sleep; that is all. There is no agitation or feeling of unhappiness as when sleeplessness proceeds from any other cause, and yet this artificial excitement may in the long run become very injurious.

Formerly only persons of more or less mature age took coffee; but now every one drinks it, and perhaps it is owing to this stimulus of the mind that a great number of people are set in motion, and besiege all the avenues of Olympus and of the Temple of Memory.

The cobbler who wrote the tragedy of the "Queen of Palmyra," which all Parisians heard him read a few years ago, drank a great deal of coffee; for this reason he rose higher than the "joiner of Nevers," who was a mere drunkard.¹

Coffee is a drink far more powerful than people commonly think. A man of good constitution may drink two bottles of wine every day and live a long time, but that same man would not stand the same quantity of coffee so long; he would become an idiot or die of consumption.

I have seen in London, in Leicester Square, a man whom

¹ The names of the literary cobbler and joiner have not come down to posterity. — T.B.

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the immoderate use of coffee had reduced to the state of a helpless cripple; he no longer suffered any pain, had become accustomed to his condition, and limited himself to five or six cups of coffee a day.

Every father and every mother should strictly forbid their children to take any coffee, unless they wish to see them shrivelled up, puny, and withered little things before they are twenty years old. This advice should be of especial use to Parisians, whose children are not always as strong and healthy as those who are born in certain departments, that of the Ain, for example.

I am one of those who have been obliged to give up the use of coffee, and I shall finish this section by relating how I was one day completely under its influence.

One day the Duke of Massa,¹ then Minister of Justice, asked me to do some important work for him, for which he gave me very little time, as he wished to have it early the next morning.

I made up my mind to sit up all night, and, in order not to fall asleep, I drank after dinner two large cups of nicely-smelling strong coffee.

On returning home at seven o'clock, expecting to find the necessary papers, I only found a letter to say that, on account of some official formality, I could not receive them until next day.

Thus disappointed in every respect, I went back to the house where I had dined and played a game of piquet, without feeling so absent-minded as I usually feel.

I attributed this to the coffee; but while profiting by it I

¹ C. A. Regnier (1736-1814), a celebrated lawyer, was created by Napoleon I, in 1809, Duke of Massa, and became Minister and President of the legislative body one year before his death, when the scene described by Brillat-Savarin probably took place. — TR.

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was not without some uneasiness as to how I should pass the night.

However, I went to bed at my usual hour, thinking that if I did not pass a very good night, I should at least have four or five hours sleep, which would gradually bring me to the next morning.

I was mistaken. After being two hours in bed I felt more wide-awake than ever; I was in a very lively state of mental excitation, and I pictured to myself my brain as a mill of which the wheels were constantly going without having anything to grind.

I felt I might utilise this disposition as I could not compose myself to sleep, and I occupied myself in making a poetical version of a little tale I had recently read in an English book.

I did this pretty easily, but as sleep came no nearer I began a second one, but in vain. A dozen verses exhausted my poetic vein, and I had to give up the attempt.

I therefore passed the night without sleeping, and without even feeling sleepy for a single moment; I arose next morning and passed the whole day in the same state, without any change being produced either by my meals or by my occupations. Finally, on retiring to rest the second day at my accustomed hour, I calculated that I had been forty hours without closing my eyes.

§ X. OF CHOCOLATE

Origin of Chocolate

47. The first settlers in America were impelled by the lust of gold. At that epoch, almost the only things of any value that were appreciated were mineral products. Agriculture and commerce were in their infancy, and political

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economy was as yet unknown. The Spaniards found there precious metals; now an almost worthless discovery, inasmuch as they diminish in value by becoming more abundant, and because we possess far more powerful means for increasing the mass of our riches.

These countries, where a very warm sun produces in the ground an extreme fecundity, have been found suited for the cultivation of sugar and coffee: other real treasures, such as the potato, indigo, vanilla, cinchona, cocoa, have also been discovered there.

If these discoveries have taken place in spite of the barriers that a jealous nation has erected to prevent inquiries, we may reasonably hope that they will be tenfold increased during the following years, and that the researches of the scientific men of old Europe in so many unexplored countries will enrich the three kingdoms of Nature with a great many substances which will procure us new sensations, as the vanilla bean has done, or will increase our alimentary resources, as the cacao bean has done.

When the cacao bean has been roasted, is mixed with sugar and flavoured with cinnamon, it is technically called "chocolate." Sugar forms an essential part of it, for, mixed with cacao beans alone, it is called "cocoa" and not chocolate. When, to sugar, to cinnamon, and to cocoa, the delicious aroma of vanilla is added, we obtain the highest state of perfection of this preparation.

It is to this small number of substances that taste and experience reduce the numerous ingredients which have been attempted to be mixed with cocoa, such as pepper, allspice, aniseed, ginger, and many others which have been tried in succession.

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The cacao tree is indigenous to South America, being found both in the islands and on the continent. But it is now generally admitted that the best beans are produced by the trees growing on the shores of the Maracaybo, in the valleys of Caraccas, and in the rich province of Soconusco.¹ Their beans are larger, their juice less acrid, and their aroma more developed. Since these countries have become more accessible, comparisons have been made every day, and people who are accustomed to use it are no longer deceived.

The Spanish ladies of the New World are passionately fond of chocolate; and not satisfied with taking it several times a day, they even have brought it to church. This indulgence has often brought on them the censure of their bishops, who at last shut their eyes to it. The Spanish casuist, Escobar y Mendoza,² whose metaphysic was as subtle as his morals were accommodating, declares formally that chocolate with water does not break a fast, stretching thus for the use of his fair penitents the old adage: *Liquidum non frangit jejunium*.

Chocolate was introduced into Spain about the seventeenth century; and it became at once popular, as the ladies, and especially the monks, strongly patronised this aromatic beverage. Manners have not changed in this respect, and even at the present day, on all occasions when

¹ Maracaybo is now called San Carlos, a city in Venezuela, the capital of the State of Zulia. The lake of Maracaybo, a hundred miles long, communicates by a long channel with the gulf of the same name, an inlet of the Caribbean Sea. Caraccas is the capital of the South American Republic Venezuela, and Soconusco is a district of Central America.

² Antonio Escobar y Mendoza (1589-1669), a Spanish casuist and Jesuit, an orator and author of more than forty volumes, is chiefly known by the maxim, "Good intentions justify actions considered blameable by morality and human laws." — TR.

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it is considered polite to hand some refreshment, chocolate is offered to guests in Spain.

Chocolate crossed the Pyrenees with Anne of Austria,¹ daughter of Philip III, king of Spain,² and wife of Louis XIII.³ Spanish monks also made it known by giving it as a present to their brethren in France. The various Spanish ambassadors contributed to make it fashionable, and at the commencement of the Regency⁴ it was more universally in use than coffee, because it was then drunk as an agreeable nourishment, whilst coffee was as yet merely considered a drink of luxury and curiosity.

Linnæus named the cacao, *Cacao theobroma*, or "divine food." Some people have endeavoured to find out the reason for this emphatic qualification, which some attribute to the learned man's excessive fondness for chocolate, others to his desire to please his pastor, and others again to his gallantry because a queen was the first to introduce it.

Properties of Chocolate

Chocolate has been the cause of some very scientific dissertations of which the object was to determine its nature and its properties, and to place it in the category of either hot, cold, or temperate foods; but we must own that all these learned writings have served but little the promulgation of truth.

However, time and experience, these two great masters, have proved that chocolate, when properly prepared, is a food as wholesome as it is agreeable; that it is nourishing, easily digested, and has not those inconveniences for the fair sex which are ascribed to coffee, and to which it is, on the contrary, an antidote; that it is most suitable for per-

¹ 1602-66.

² 1578-1621.

³ 1601-43.

⁴ 1715-23.

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sons who have much brain work to do, such as clergymen and lawyers, and especially for travellers; in short, that it suits the weakest stomachs; has produced some beneficial results in chronic diseases, and is the last resource in affections of the pylorus.

Chocolate owes these various properties to its being nothing but *elæosaccharum*, so that there are few other substances which contain in the same dimensions more nutrition or more alimentary particles, in such a manner that nearly everything can be assimilated.

During the late wars (1793-1815) cacao was rare, and above all very dear. People tried to find substitutes, but every effort was in vain. One of the blessings of peace has been to rid us of all those brews that we were forced to taste, out of politeness, and which were no more like chocolate than an infusion of chicory is like that of the Mocha bean.

Some persons complain that they cannot digest chocolate; others, on the contrary, pretend that it does not nourish them enough, and that it digests too quickly.

It is very probable that the first have only themselves to blame, and that the chocolate they use is of an inferior quality or badly made; because good and well-made chocolate ought to agree with every stomach that has still some digestive power left.

As for the others, the remedy is easy. They should eat a heavier breakfast and take a slice of a meat-pie, a chop, or a broiled kidney; let them then drink a good bowl of Soconusco chocolate, and thank Heaven for having given them a stomach of superior activity.

I'll take the opportunity of making a remark, of which the correctness may be relied on.

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If any one, after having breakfasted well, amply and copiously, drinks a large cup of good chocolate, everything will have perfectly digested three hours afterwards, and one will be able to dine notwithstanding. . . . For science' sake and by dint of eloquence, I induced several ladies to try this experiment, who one and all assured me that it would make them ill. They always felt themselves the better for it, and were loud in their praises of the professor.

Persons who take chocolate commonly enjoy pretty good health, and are less subject than other people to many trifling complaints which make life miserable; they also do not increase in corpulence. These two observations any man can make among his acquaintances whose manner of living is well known.

I ought here to speak of the properties of chocolate *à l'ambre*, which I have tested by a great many experiments, the result of which I am delighted to bring before my readers.¹

Let, then, every man who has indulged too deeply of the cup of pleasure; every man who has devoted to work a considerable part of the time which he ought to have employed in sleep; every man of intelligence who feels his faculties temporarily dulled; every one who finds the air damp, time hanging heavily on his hands, and the weather unendurable; every man who is tormented by a fixed idea which deprives him of the liberty of thinking; — let all such people, we say, indulge in a pint at least of chocolate mixed with amber, in the proportion of from sixty to seventy-two grains to the half kilogramme, and they will see wonders.

In my particular way of distinguishing things, I have

¹ See the chapter "Varieties," x. B.

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called chocolate with amber the "chocolate for the afflicted," because in each of those cases I have mentioned, persons experience some sentiment that is common to them all, and which resembles affliction.

Difficulties in making Good Chocolate

In Spain they have very good chocolate, but people are scarcely disposed to send such a distance for it, for all persons are not equally clever in making it; moreover, when they have received from Spain an inferior quality they are obliged to drink it as it is.

Italian chocolates do not suit the French palate; the bean is generally too much burnt, which gives the chocolate a bitter taste and makes it less nutritious, because a part of the bean has been reduced to carbon.

The use of chocolate has become quite common in France, and everybody thinks they can make it; but very few have arrived at perfection, as the art is far from being an easy one.

In the first place, it is necessary to recognise good cocoa and to be willing to use it in all its purity, for even in a box of the best sort inferior samples may be found, and a manufacturer who does not understand his own interest, often allows damaged beans to be put in that should have been rejected, if he really wished to produce a superior article.

The roasting of the cocoa bean is also a delicate operation; it requires a certain tact which is akin to inspiration. Some men have this faculty naturally, and never make mistakes.

A peculiar talent is also necessary to regulate the quantity of sugar that ought to enter into the mixture. This quantity is not invariable and a matter of course, but must

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be determined partly by the more or less aromatic properties of the bean and partly by the more or less roasting which it has undergone.

Grinding and mixing also require the same amount of care, inasmuch as it is on their absolute perfection the greater or lesser digestibility of chocolate depends.

Other considerations ought to preside at the choice and the quantity of spices, which should not be the same for chocolates destined to be taken as foods and those taken as luxuries; they should also vary when the mass should or should not be mixed with vanilla; so that to make exquisite chocolate a number of very subtle equations must be resolved, by which we profit without suspecting that they ever took place.

For a long time machines have been employed to manufacture chocolate. We do not think that this method adds anything to its perfection; but the cost of producing it is thereby much lessened, and those who have adopted this method might be able to sell chocolate much cheaper. They usually, however, sell it at a higher price, and this fact proves to us that the true spirit of commerce has not yet become naturalised in France; for, it is but right that the greater facility of machines should be as advantageous to the consumer as to the dealer.

As a lover of chocolate, we have tried samples of nearly all the manufacturers, and we are of opinion that M. Debauve's, rue des Saints Pères 26, Paris, is the best.

We ought not to be surprised at this; M. Debauve is a most distinguished chemist, who employed in the manufacture of chocolate a knowledge which he intended to use in a much larger way.

Those who have not been engaged in this manufacture

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can scarcely imagine the difficulties that have to be overcome in order to arrive at perfection in any matter, nor the attention, tact, and experience that are requisite to produce a chocolate sweet without being insipid, firm without being bitter, aromatic without being unwholesome, and close in texture without being feculent.

Such are the chocolates of M. Debauve. They owe their superiority to a choice of good materials, to a resolution to let no inferior article leave his manufactory, and to the influence of the master's superintendence over all the little details of the manufacture.

In accordance with the principles of science M. Debauve, moreover, offers to his numerous customers medicated chocolates of pleasant taste for different complaints.

Thus to people who are not corpulent, he offers analeptic chocolate with salop; to those who have delicate nerves, antispasmodic chocolate mixed with orange-flower water; to irritable temperaments, chocolate mixed with almond milk; to which he will undoubtedly add the "chocolate of the afflicted," *à l'ambre*, and prepared scientifically.

But his principal merit is above all, that for a moderate price we can obtain an excellent chocolate for daily use, which in the morning is to us sufficient as breakfast, which at dinner pleases us in creams, and at the end of the evening rejoices us anew in ices, "croquettes," and other delicacies, without counting the agreeable amusement of pastiles or crackers, with or without mottoes.

We only know M. Debauve by his preparations. We have never seen him; but we are aware that he most powerfully contributes to free France from the tribute she formerly paid to Spain, in providing for Paris and the provinces a chocolate of which the reputation increases continually.

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We also know that he receives every day fresh orders from foreign countries; it is, therefore, for this reason, and as one of the men who founded the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry, that we speak of him here with approval, and bestow on him that praise of which it will be seen that we are not too lavish.¹

The Best Way of making Chocolate

The Americans prepare their cocoa paste without sugar. When they wish to take chocolate they have some boiling water brought; each one scrapes into his cup as much cacao as he likes, pours hot water on it, and adds sugar and spices just as it suits him.

This way of making chocolate neither agrees with our manners nor with our tastes, and we like our chocolate manufactured for consumption.

Thus prepared, transcendental chemistry teaches us that chocolate should not be scraped with a knife or bruised with a pestle, because the dry friction which takes place in both these cases converts some portions of the sugar into starch, and renders this beverage more insipid.

Thus, to make chocolate, that is to say, to render it fit for immediate consumption, about one ounce and a half should be taken for each cup, which should be dissolved gradually in water, as it gets hotter, stirring it all the while with a wooden spatula. Then let it boil for a quarter of an hour until the solution becomes thick, and serve it up quite hot.

¹ M. Brillat-Savarin sang the praises of M. Debauxe in 1825. This firm still exists, at least we find its name in the Paris Directory (Bottin) for this year (1884), established in the same street it was in in 1825, but at No. 30. Many other manufactories of excellent chocolate have sprung up in England, France, and other countries since that time. — Tr.

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More than fifty years ago Madame d'Arestrel, Superior of the Convent of the Visitation at Belley, said to me: "Sir, when you wish to have good chocolate, get it made overnight in an earthenware coffee-pot and leave it in it. By remaining there through the night it becomes concentrated and acquires a softness that greatly improves it. The good God cannot be offended at this trifling nicety, for He Himself is all perfection."

MEDITATION VII

THEORY OF FRYING

48. It was a beautiful day in the month of May; the sun shed its most pleasant rays on the smoky roofs of the City of Pleasure, and the streets, for a wonder, showed neither mud nor dust.

The heavy "diligences" had for a long time ceased to shake the streets, the huge rubbish-carts were at rest, and only open carriages were to be seen, full of indigenous and exotic fair ladies, shaded under most elegant hats, and casting disdainful looks on the pitiful creatures who passed, and coquettish glances on the good-looking young men.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when the professor sat down in his arm-chair to meditate.

His right leg rested vertically on the floor, his left stretched diagonally across it; he had his back comfortably supported, and his hands rested on the lion's heads which terminate the arms of this venerable piece of furniture.

His lofty brow indicated a love for serious studies, and his mouth a taste for agreeable recreation. His air was collected, and his attitude such that any person who could have seen him would have exclaimed: "This man of ancient days must be a sage!"

When thus settled, the professor sent for his head cook, and immediately that servitor arrived, ready to receive advice, lessons, or orders.

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ALLOCUTION

“Well, M. La Planche!” said the professor with that grave tone which penetrates to the very bottom of one’s heart, “every one who dines at my table proclaims you a soup-maker of the first class. This is very well, for soup is the first consolation of a hungry stomach; but I am sorry to see that you are uncertain as a ‘fryer.’”

“I heard you yesterday groan when that magnificent sole was served up to us, pale, flabby, and discoloured. My friend Revenaz¹ threw on you a glance of disapproval; M. Henri Roux turned his gnomonic nose to the west, and President Sibuet deplored this failure as a public calamity.

“This misfortune has befallen you because you neglected a theory of which you do not feel the full importance. You are a little obstinate, and I have had some difficulty in making you understand that all the operations of your laboratory are naught but the execution of the eternal laws of nature, and that certain things that you do without attention, and merely because you have seen others do them, can nevertheless be traced to the highest abstractions of science.

“Listen then to me attentively, and learn, so that you may not have again to blush for your workmanship.

§ 1. CHEMISTRY

“The liquids that you expose to the action of fire cannot all be charged with the same quantity of heat; nature has given them all various properties; this is an order of things

¹ Alexis Revenaz, born at Seisset, in the district of Belley, about 1757. An elector of the grand college, we may propose his career to any one as an example of prudent conduct, joined to inflexible probity.

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of which nature alone has the secret, and which is called 'capacity for caloric.'

"Thus you might with impunity dip your finger in boiling spirits of wine, but you would take it out quickly enough from boiling brandy, and quicker still if it were water, whilst a hasty immersion in boiling oil would hurt you cruelly, as the capacity of oil for heat is at least three times that of water.

"It is in consequence of this disposition that we see that hot liquids act in a different manner on the sapid substances that are plunged in them. Those which we treat by water are softened, dissolve and are reduced to rags; and soup or extracts are thus made. Those, on the contrary, which are treated with oil become contracted, are coloured in a more or less deep manner, and finally are carbonised.

"In the former case, water dissolves and draws out the interior juices of the alimentary substances placed in it; in the second case, these juices are preserved, because oil cannot dissolve them; and if these substances dry up, it is because a continuous heat vaporises the humid parts.

"The two methods have different names, and boiling in oil or grease substances intended to be eaten, is called 'frying.' I think I have told you already that oil or fat, from a culinary point of view, are almost synonymous words, fat being merely a concrete oil, or oil a liquid fat.

§ II. APPLICATION

"Fried foods are always welcome in entertainments; they introduce a pleasing variety, they are agreeable to look at, they keep their original savour, and can be eaten by the hand, which always pleases ladies.

"Frying also gives to cooks a number of means to con-

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ceal what has appeared the day before, and at a pinch is an aid for unexpected demands, for it takes not much more time to fry a four-pound carp than to boil an egg.

“All the merit of a good fry is derived from the ‘surprise’; thus they term the invasion of the boiling liquid which at the very instant of the immersion carbonises or browns the external surface of the body placed in it.

“By means of the ‘surprise’ a sort of vault is formed which encloses the substance, prevents the fat from reaching it, and concentrates the juices, which thus undergo a kind of interior boiling that gives to the food all the taste of which it is susceptible.

“In order that the ‘surprise’ may take place, the boiling liquid should have acquired heat enough for its action to be sharp and instantaneous; but it only reaches that point when it has been a considerable time on a brisk and blazing fire.

“We know by the following method if the frying matter is sufficiently hot: we cut a long and narrow slice of bread, and put it in the frying-pan for five or six seconds; if, when it is withdrawn, it is firm and brownish, immerse at once whatever you want to fry; if not, you must put on more fire, and try again.

“The ‘surprise’ once effected, moderate the fire, so that the heat be not too quick, and in order that the juices you have enclosed may undergo by means of a more prolonged warmth the alteration which unites them and improves their taste.

“You have without doubt observed that the surface of well-fried objects cannot dissolve either salt or sugar, which they may nevertheless need according to their respective natures. Thus, you will not fail to reduce these two sub-

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stances into very fine powder that they may adhere very easily, so that with a dredge the fry may be seasoned by juxtaposition.

"I say nothing about choosing oils and fats; because the various cookery books which I have put in your library will give you sufficient information on that head.

"Nevertheless, do not forget when you get one of those trouts which scarcely weigh more than a quarter of a pound, and which are fetched from brooks of running water that murmur far from the capital, do not forget, I beg you, to fry these in the very finest olive oil you have. This dish, so simple, properly sprinkled and served up with slices of lemon, is worthy to be offered to a cardinal.¹

"Treat in exactly the same way smelts, of which adepts think so much. The smelt is among fishes what the beccafico is amongst birds. It is the same in size, the same in flavour, and the same in excellence.

"These two prescriptions are founded on the very nature of things. Experience has taught us that we ought only to use olive oil for frying that must be quickly done, or that does not require a great heat, because prolonged heat develops an empyreumatic and disagreeable taste, produced by some parts of the parenchyma, of which it is difficult to get rid, and which become carbonised.

"You have the charge of my lower regions, and you were the first person who had the glory of presenting to an as-

¹ M. Aulissio, a Neapolitan lawyer, a very well-informed man and a very fair amateur violoncello player, dining one day with me, and eating something that was quite to his taste, exclaimed: "*Questo è un vero boccone di cardinale!*" "Why," I replied in the same language, "don't you say as we say, 'fit for a king'?" "My dear sir," answered the amateur, "we Italians think that kings cannot be *gourmands*, because their meals are too hurried and too formal; but the cardinals — ah!" and with that slight chuckle which is peculiar to him, "Hou hou! hou hou! hou hou!"

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tonished and surprised universe a huge turbot fried. That day there was, among the elect, great jubilation.

“Go, continue to bestow pains on whatever you attempt, never forgetting that from the moment the guests have put their feet in my drawing-room, it is *we* who are responsible for their happiness.”

MEDITATION VIII

OF THIRST

49. THIRST is the internal feeling of the desire to drink.

A heat of about 104 degrees Fahrenheit constantly vapourising the different fluids of which the circulation keeps up life, the loss which results from this would soon have made these fluids unfit to fulfil their destiny if they were not often renewed and refreshed: this desire causes us to experience thirst.

We believe that the seat of the feeling of thirst is in the whole of the digestive system. When any one is thirsty, as we have often been when out shooting, there is a well-defined feeling that all the inhaling portions of the mouth, the gullet, and the stomach are parched up and cauterised; and if sometimes we appease thirst by the application of liquid elsewhere than to these organs, as, for example, by a bath, it is because as soon as they are immediately introduced into the circulation, they are drawn rapidly to the seat of evil, and become remedies.

DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF THIRST

Looking at the subject in all its bearings, we may descry three varieties of thirst; latent, factitious, and burning.

Latent or habitual thirst is the insensible equilibrium which is established between transpiratory vaporisation and the necessity of supplying what is lost. It is this which, although we experience no pain, invites us to drink while we eat, and enables us to drink at nearly every minute of

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the day. This thirst always accompanies us, and forms to some extent a part of our existence.

Factitious thirst, which is peculiar to the human species, is derived from that innate instinct that induces us to seek in liquids a force that Nature has not placed there, and which is only arrived at by fermentation. It constitutes an artificial enjoyment rather than a natural desire. This thirst is in reality unextinguishable, inasmuch as the liquids that are taken to appease it have the invariable faculty of reviving it. This thirst, which ends by becoming habitual, makes drunkards in all countries; it happens almost always that the desire to drink only ceases when liquor falls short, or when the drinker is so entirely finished up that he is completely disabled.

When, on the other hand, thirst is only appeased by cold water, which appears to be its natural antidote, a mouthful more than what is actually necessary is never drunk.

Burning thirst is that which is caused by the augmentation of the desire and by the impossibility of satisfying latent thirst.

It is called "burning" because it is accompanied by heat of the tongue, dryness of the palate, and extreme heat in the whole body.

The sensation of thirst is so keen that the word is used, in nearly every language, to express an excessive longing and an eager desire. Thus, there is a thirst for gold, for riches, power, vengeance, etc., expressions which would never have obtained currency if any one who had once been thirsty did not feel the correctness of this application.

Appetite is accompanied by a sensation which is pleas-

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ant so long as it does not become hunger; thirst has no medium, and the moment when it is felt there is uneasiness and anxiety; and this anxiety becomes terrible when there is no expectation of quenching one's thirst.

By a just compensation, drinking may, under certain circumstances, procure us very keen enjoyments; thus, when we quench extreme thirst, or when we are moderately thirsty and imbibe a delicious beverage, the whole papillary system is aroused from the top of the tongue to the depth of the stomach.

We die much more quickly of thirst than of hunger. There are examples of men who have lived for eight days without eating bread, because they drank water,¹ whilst those who are absolutely deprived of anything to drink never pass the fifth day.

The reason of this difference is, that the latter die simply of exhaustion and weakness, whilst the former are seized by a fever that burns them up, and that always keeps increasing in its violence.

People are not even always able to resist thirst for a comparatively short time. Thus, in 1789, one of the Swiss bodyguard of Louis XVI died from remaining only twenty-four hours without liquids.

He had been drinking with some of his comrades, and one of them blamed him for emptying his glass oftener than the others, and said he could not do for a single moment without drinking.

He then laid a wager of ten bottles of wine that he would remain for twenty-four hours without drinking anything.

¹ We have improved on this since our author wrote. It is said that Dr. Tanner in the United States lived without food and only on water for more than forty days. — TR.

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From that moment the soldier ceased to drink, though he remained for more than two hours before going away and saw his comrades drink.

The night passed quietly, as we may imagine; but at daybreak he found it rather hard to do without his usual small glass of brandy.

Throughout the forenoon he was weary and restless; he rose and sat down again without any purpose, and seemed not to know what he was about.

About one o'clock he lay down, fancying he would be more calm; he felt in pain and was really ill, but those about him in vain tried to induce him to drink something; he declared he could get on quite well till evening. He wished to win his wager, and it is probable that some soldierly pride also prevented him from giving way to pain.

He kept up in this way until seven o'clock; but at half-past seven he found himself getting worse, became moribund, and died without being able to taste a glass of wine which was offered him.

All these details were told me that very evening by M. Schneider, a fifer in the company of the Swiss bodyguard, at whose house I lived when in Versailles.

CAUSES OF THIRST

50. Many circumstances united or separated contribute to increase thirst. We shall indicate a few, which have not been without influence on our usages.

Heat increases thirst; hence the inclination men always have to go and live in hot weather on the banks of rivers.

Bodily exertion increases thirst; thus, when a proprietor

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employs workmen he always provides for them some drink; hence the proverb: "The wine which is given to the labourers always fetches the best price."

Dancing increases thirst; for this reason there always are in ball-rooms plenty of invigorating or refreshing drinks.

Public speaking increases thirst; hence the glass of water that lecturers study to drink with grace, and which we shall soon see on the edge of each pulpit, side by side with the white handkerchief.¹

Genetic pleasure increases thirst; hence the poetical descriptions of Cyprus, Amathonte, Gnidos, and other places inhabited by Venus, where we always find cooling shades and brooks which wind along, flow, and babble.

Singing increases thirst; this accounts for the universal reputation all musicians have of being indefatigable drinkers. A musician myself, I oppose this prejudiced statement, which is at the present time as devoid of wit as of truth.

The artists who frequent our drawing-rooms are discreet and careful in what they take to drink; but what they have lost in one way they gain in another; and if they no longer love the cup, they are such superhuman *gourmands* that I have been told the celebration of the feast of St. Cecilia lasted for more than twenty hours at the Club of Transcendental Harmony.

EXAMPLE

51. Exposure to a rapid current of air is a very active cause of an increase of thirst, and I think that the follow-

¹ Canon Delestra, a very agreeable preacher, never failed to swallow a candied walnut whenever he made a pause between each point of his discourse, so that his audience might then, if they chose, cough, expectorate, or blow their noses.

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ing incident will be read with pleasure, especially by sportsmen.

We know that quails take a great delight in dwelling on the loftiest hills, where their broods may be more easily hatched, because the harvest is gathered much later there.

When the rye is cut they migrate to the barley and oats; and when these are garnered, they go into those parts where the less ripe corn stands.

It is then the time to shoot them, because a small number of acres of land abound with quails, which a month previously were flying about over the whole parish; moreover, as the season is drawing to an end, they are as large and fat as can be desired.

It is for the purpose of shooting quails that I found myself one day with some friends on a hill in the arrondissement of Nantua,¹ in the canton known under the name of "Plan d'Hotonne," and we were just beginning to shoot on one of the finest days of the month of September, illumed by a brilliant sunshine unknown to Cockneys.²

Whilst we were breakfasting a very violent northerly wind sprang up, which was rather against our pleasures, but did not prevent our starting.

We had scarcely been shooting for a quarter of an hour when the weakest man of our party said he was thirsty; we should doubtless have made fun of him, but we all felt the same sensation.

We all took a drink, for a donkey laden with refreshments followed us, but the relief offered was of brief duration. Our thirst came quickly back again, and that so

¹ A small town in the Department of the Ain. — Tr.

² A name given to those inhabitants of London who never left their native city. It is equivalent to the French *badauds*.

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violently, that some of us thought we were ill, and others ready to become so. Every one talked of going back, which would have given us a walk of ten leagues to no purpose.

I had had time to collect my ideas, and I discovered the reason of this strange thirst. I told my companions that we suffered from the effects of four causes: the notable diminution of the column of air which weighed on our body, and which rendered the circulation more rapid; the action of the sun, which warmed us directly; walking, that increased perspiration; and more than all this, the action of the wind, which, piercing us through and through, removed all perspiration and fluid, and prevented all moisture of our skin.

I added that, taking all in all, there was no danger; that the enemy being known, it was necessary to combat him; and that he could make no advance if we were to take something to drink every half hour.

The precaution was nevertheless insufficient, as our thirst was not to be quenched. Water, brandy, wine and water, and brandy and water, were not of the slightest use; we were thirsty even while drinking, and we were uncomfortable throughout the whole day.

This day finished, nevertheless, like any other day; the proprietor of the estate of Latour entertained us, and we added our provisions to his.

We dined very well, and soon we got up and buried ourselves in the hay, where we slept soundly.

Next day my theory received the sanction of experience. The wind had fallen entirely during the night, and though the sun was as brilliant, and even felt hotter than on the previous day, we went shooting for a great part of the day without feeling inconvenienced by the thirst.

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But the worst of it was, that, though the day before, we had very prudently filled our flasks before we left home, they had not been able to resist the repeated charges we had made on them; they were now nothing more than bodies without souls, and we had to fall back upon the wine-casks of the country innkeepers.

It had come to this, but we grumbled at it, and I anathematised the parching wind in an allocution full of invectives when I saw that dish fit to be set before kings, "spinach with quail fat," about to be washed down with a wine scarcely as good as that of Suresnes.¹

¹ Suresnes, a very pretty village two leagues from Paris, and well known for its bad wine. The proverbial saying is, that it needs three men to drink a glass of Suresnes wine, namely, one to swallow the wine, and two supporters to hold him up and prevent his courage from oozing away. The same thing is said of the wine of Périeux, which does not prevent its being drunk. Our author has already spoken of Suresnes wine in the Second Meditation, § xi, and contrasted it with Chambertin.

MEDITATION IX

ON DRINKS ¹

52. WE ought to understand by the term "drink" any liquid which can be used with our food.

Water appears to be the most natural beverage. It is found everywhere where there are animals, replaces milk for adults, and is as necessary to us as air.

WATER

Water is the sole beverage which really appeases thirst, and for this reason it can only be drunk in small quantities. The greatest portion of the other beverages which men drink are nothing but palliatives, and if man had always kept to water, it never would have been said of him that one of his privileges was to drink without being thirsty.

PROMPT EFFECT OF DRINKS

Whatever is drunk is absorbed by the animal economy with an extreme facility; it is prompt in its effects, and the relief it affords is almost instantaneous. Give to an exhausted man the most substantial food, he will eat it with difficulty, and will at first not feel any great benefit. But give him a glass of wine or brandy, and that same instant he will feel better, and revive.

I can support this theory by a rather remarkable in-

¹ This chapter is purely philosophical. The details of the various known beverages cannot enter into the plan I have formed; such an enumeration would have been endless.

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stance which was told me by my nephew, Colonel Guigard, a man naturally not disposed to tell stories, and whose veracity may be relied on.

He was at the head of a detachment which was returning from the siege of Jaffa,¹ and was only about a quarter of a mile from the place where they were to halt and expected to find water, when they found by the roadside the bodies of some soldiers who had preceded them by a day's march, and who were killed by the heat.

Amongst the victims of this burning climate was a carabineer well known to several soldiers of the detachment.

He must have been dead for more than twenty-four hours, and the sun, which had been beating on him the whole day, had made his face as black as that of a crow.

Some of the soldiers went up to him, either to take a last look at him or to act as his heirs, if he had left anything; but they were surprised to see that his limbs were not stiffened, and that there was still some warmth round the region of the heart.

"Give him a drop of the real stuff" (*sacré chien*), cried a facetious fellow amongst the bystanders: "I'll bet that if he's not very far gone into the next world, the taste of it will bring him back!"

In fact, at the first spoonful of spirits the dead man opened his eyes; they then rubbed his temples, whilst uttering expressions of astonishment, made him swallow a little more, and in a quarter of an hour he was able, with some assistance, to sit on the back of a donkey.

He was thus led to a well, and watched over during the night; then they gave him a few dates to eat, fed him with

¹ Jaffa, a Syrian town and harbour on the Mediterranean. In 1799 Bonaparte took it after a long siege and a desperate resistance.



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ON DRINKS

precaution; and the next day, having remounted his ass, he arrived at Cairo along with the others.

STRONG DRINKS

53. This species of instinct, as general as it is imperious, is very remarkable, and leads men to discover strong drinks.

Wine, the most pleasant of drinks, whether we owe it to Noah, who planted the vine, or whether it is due to Bacchus, who squeezed out the juice of the grape, dates from the infancy of the world; and beer, said to have been invented by Osiris,¹ goes back to those times beyond which everything is uncertain.

All men, even those whom we agree to call savages, have been so tormented by a passion for strong drinks, that they have succeeded in finding some, however limited their capacities were.

They caused the milk of their domestic animals to turn sour; they extracted the juice of various fruits and roots which they thought contained a fermentative principle. Wherever men are holding social intercourse, they are found to be provided with spirituous liquors, which they make use of at their banquets, their sacrifices, their marriages, their funeral rites; in short, whenever there is any feasting or solemnity going on.

For many centuries wine was drunk and sung without any one imagining the possibility of extracting from it the spirituous part that makes its strength. But the Arabs having taught us the art of distillation, which they had

¹ Bacchus was the god of wine, according to the Roman mythology; Osiris, in Egyptian mythology, the judge of the dead, and brother and husband of Isis. — Tr.

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invented to extract the perfume of flowers, and especially of the rose, so celebrated in their writings, some commenced to think it possible that the cause of this extremely delicate flavour, which stimulates taste in such a special manner, might be ascertained; and so, after one experiment and after another, they discovered alcohol, spirits of wine, brandy, etc.

Alcohol is the monarch of liquids, and carries the exaltation of the palate to the highest degree; its various preparations have opened new sources of enjoyments; ¹ it communicates to certain medicines ² an energy which they would never have possessed without this vehicle; it has even become in our hands a formidable weapon, for the natives of the New World have been almost as much overcome and slain by brandy as by gunpowder.

The discovery of how to extract alcohol has also led to other important results; for as this method consists in separating and exposing those parts which constitute a body and distinguish it from all others, it has served as a model for those who devote themselves to analogous researches, and who have made known to us substances previously unknown, such as quinine, morphine, strychnine, and others of the same sort, which they have discovered, or which are still to be discovered.

Be this as it may, this thirst for a kind of liquid which Nature has wrapt up in mystery, this extraordinary desire, influencing all races of men, under all climates and in all latitudes, is well worthy of attracting the attention of the philosophical observer.

I, too, have considered this matter as others have done, and I feel tempted to place the desire for fermented liquors,

¹ Table liqueurs.

² Elixirs.

ON DRINKS

which is unknown amongst animals, side by side with the anxiety about a future state, which is also foreign to those animals, and to regard them both as two distinctive attributes of man — the masterpiece of the last sublunary revolution.

MEDITATION X

AND EPISODIC ON THE END OF THE WORLD

54. I SAID "the last sublunary revolution," and this thought, thus expressed, has led me far, very far away from my subject.

Undoubted proofs teach us that our globe has already undergone many absolute changes, which have been, so to speak, so many "ends of the world," and I do not know what instinct warns us that there are other revolutions yet to follow.

Already, men have often thought that such revolutions were on the eve of taking place, and many people are still alive whom the watery comet predicted by the good Jérôme Lalande,¹ sent to the confessional.

The effect of all this has been that not a few persons seem inclined to surround such a catastrophe with vengeance, destroying angels, trumpets, and similar dreadful accessories.

Alas! such a deal of noise is not necessary to destroy us; we are not worth so much pomp, and if it be the Lord's will, the whole face of the globe can be changed without so much ostentation.

Let us suppose, for example, that one of these wandering stars of which no one knows either the route or why they exist, and whose appearance has always been accompanied

¹ "The good" Joseph-Jérôme le Français de Lalande (1732-1807), an astronomer as celebrated for his scientific knowledge as for his eccentricities and his open adherence to Atheism, was a countryman of Brillat-Savarin, and born in the Department of the Ain. — TR.

EPISODIC ON THE END OF THE WORLD

by a traditional terror; let us suppose, I say, that such a comet should pass sufficiently near to the sun to become charged with a superabundance of caloric, and then should come near enough to the earth to produce six months of summer everywhere, or a heat of 167 degrees Fahrenheit, which is a heat twice as great as that of the comet of 1811.

At the end of that doleful season every living or growing thing would have perished; all sounds would have ceased. The earth would revolve silently until other circumstances should have developed other germs; and nevertheless, the cause of this disaster would remain lost in the vast fields of space, and would never have come nearer to us than a few hundred millions of leagues.

This event, quite as possible as any other, has always appeared to me an interesting subject for contemplation, and I never cease to dwell on it.

It is curious to follow in our minds this heat increasing in intensity, to foresee its effects, its development and its action, and to ask ourselves:

Quid during the first day, during the second day, and so on until the last?

Quid about air, earth, and water, the formation, combination, and explosion of gases?

Quid about mankind, considered with regard to age, sex, strength, and weakness?

Quid about the obedience to the laws, submission to authority, respect of persons and property?

Quid about the means sought, or attempts made, to escape the danger?

Quid as to the ties of love, friendship, kindred, and as to selfishness and disinterestedness?

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Quid as to religious sentiments, faith, resignation, hope, and so on?

History can supply us with some information as to the moral influences, for already the end of the world has been predicted several times, even a particular day being sometimes specified.

I am truly sorry I am unable to inform my readers how wisely I regulated all these things in my own mind; but I will not deprive them of the pleasure of applying themselves to it. This may perhaps shorten some of their sleepless hours at night, and give them a few hours doze during the day.

Great danger dissolves all ties. In the great yellow fever epidemic, which took place in Philadelphia about the year 1792, husbands were seen shutting the doors of their conjugal homes on their wives, children deserting their fathers, and many similar phenomena.

Quod a nobis Deus avertat !

MEDITATION XI

ON GOURMANDISE

55. I HAVE consulted the dictionaries under the word *gourmandise*, and I am not at all satisfied with what I find. There is a perpetual confusion between *gourmandise*, properly so called, and "gluttony" and "voracity," whence I infer that lexicographers, however otherwise very estimable, do not belong to those amiable scientific men who can eat gracefully a wing of a partridge *au suprême*, and then, by raising the little finger, wash it down with a glass of Lafitte or Clos-Vougeot.

They have forgotten, they were entirely oblivious of the social *gourmandise*, which includes Athenian elegance, Roman luxury, and French refinement; which arranges wisely, orders dishes to be prepared skilfully, appreciates energetically, and judges profoundly. This precious quality might almost rank as a virtue, and is very certainly the source of our purest enjoyments.

DEFINITIONS

Let us define in order that we shall understand each other.

Gourmandise is an impassioned, rational, and habitual preference for all objects which flatter the sense of taste.

Gourmandise is opposed to excess; any person who eats more than he can digest or who gets intoxicated, runs the risk of being struck out from the list of its votaries.

Gourmandise also comprises a love for tit-bits which is

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merely an analogous preference for light, delicate, small dishes, pastry, sweets, and so forth. This is a modification introduced in favour of ladies and men of feminine tastes.

From whatever point of view *gourmandise* is examined, it deserves nothing but praise and encouragement.

Physically, it is the result and the proof of the wholesome and perfect state of the organs destined to nutrition.

Morally, it shows implicit resignation to the commands of the Creator, who, in ordering man to eat that he may live, invites him to do so by appetite, encourages him by flavour, and rewards him by pleasure.

ADVANTAGES OF GOURMANDISE

Considered from the point of view of political economy, *gourmandise* is the common tie which unites nations by the reciprocal exchange of various articles which are daily consumed.

It is the cause why wines, brandies, sugars, groceries, pickled and salted viands, and provisions of every kind, even eggs and melons, are sent from pole to pole.

It gives a proportionate price to things which are middling, good, or excellent, whether these qualities are artificial, or have been given to them by Nature.

It sustains the hope and emulation of a crowd of fishermen, sportsmen, gardeners, and others who every day stock the most wealthy larders with the result of their labour and their skill.

Finally, it supports an industrious multitude of cooks, pastry-cooks, confectioners, and other food-preparers, who, under different titles, all in their turn employ for their wants other and various workmen, which gives rise, at all

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times and at all hours, to a circulation of capital the most practised mind cannot reckon up, or calculate its quotient.

Let us also remark that this branch of industry which has *gourmandise* for its object, presents so much the more advantages, as on the one hand it derives its support from the largest incomes, and on the other from wants that spring up afresh every day.

In the state of society which we have now reached, it is difficult to imagine a race living solely on bread and vegetables. If such a nation existed, it would undoubtedly have been conquered by carnivorous armies, — like the Hindoos, who have been successively the prey of all those who cared to attack them, — or else it would be converted by the cooking of their neighbours, as the Bœotians have been who became *gourmands* after the battle of Leuctra.¹

SEQUEL

56. *Gourmandise* offers great resources for levying taxes, for it brings contributions to town dues, to custom-houses, to indirect taxation. Everything we eat pays a tax, and there is no exchequer of which the lovers of good living are not the firmest supports.

Shall we speak of that swarm of cooks who for many centuries past annually leave France to instruct foreign nations in *gourmandise*. The majority succeed, and then, in obedience to an instinct which never dies in a Frenchman's heart, bring back to their country the fruits of their economy. This contribution is far greater than might be

¹ Leuctra, a village in Bœotia, to the south of Thebes, where Epaminondas and the Thebans defeated Cleombrotos and the Spartans B.C. 371, and overthrew their supremacy. — TR.

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supposed, and therefore these people will be honoured by posterity as others have been.

But if nations are grateful, then Frenchmen, above all other nations, ought to erect a temple and altars to *gourmandise*.

INFLUENCE OF GOURMANDISE

57. By the treaty of the month of November, 1815, France was compelled to pay to the allies seven hundred and fifty million francs, or about thirty millions sterling, in three years.

To this sum should be added the amount required to satisfy the demands for compensation of the inhabitants of various countries, of which the allied sovereigns had stipulated the interests to be paid, amounting to more than three hundred million francs, or about twelve millions sterling.

Finally, to this should be added the various requisitions in kind of the enemies' generals, who filled whole waggons, which they sent towards the frontiers, and for which the public treasury had eventually to pay — in all, more than fifteen hundred million francs, or about sixty millions sterling.¹

We ought to have felt some apprehension that such large payments daily made in hard cash would have produced a deficiency in the treasury, would have depreciated all fictitious values, and finally have brought on us all those evils which menace a country without cash and without means of procuring it.

¹ Our author seems to forget that Napoleon I, his marshals, generals, and officers, had also levied requisitions and contributions in foreign countries, and that pretty freely. — TR.

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“Alas!” said all who had anything to lose, when they saw the fatal tumbril coming for its load in the Rue Vivienne; ¹ “alas! there is all our money emigrating in a lump! Next year, we shall go down on our knees before a crown-piece; we shall fall into the deplorable condition of a ruined man; speculations of every kind will be unsuccessful; it will be impossible to borrow; there will be nothing but consumption, exhaustion, and civil death.”

The result contradicted all these fears; all payments were made with ease, to the great astonishment of every financier; our credit rose, loans were eagerly caught at, and during all the time this “superpurgation” lasted, the rate of exchange, this infallible gauge of monetary circulation, was in our favour — that is to say, it was arithmetically proved that more money came into France than ever went out of it.

What power came to our aid? What divinity worked this miracle? . . . *Gourmandise*.

When the Britons, Germans, Teutons, Cimmerians, and Scythians made their irruption into France, they brought with them a rare voracity and stomachs of no common capacity.

They did not long remain satisfied with the official cheer which a forced hospitality had to supply them with; but they aspired to more refined enjoyments, and soon the Queen City became nothing but an enormous refectory.

Those invaders ate in restaurants, eating-houses, inns, taverns, at open-air stalls, and even in the streets.

They gorged themselves with meat, fish, game, truffles, pastry, and especially with our fruit.

They drank with an avidity equal to their appetite, and always ordered the dearest wines, in the hope of finding in

¹ At that time the Bank of France was in that street. — Tr.

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them some enjoyments they had not before known, and which they were afterwards quite astonished they did not meet with.

Superficial observers did not know what to think of all this eating without end or limit, but your genuine Frenchman laughed and rubbed his hands, saying, "We have them now under the spell, and they will pay us back this evening more crowns than was counted out to them this morning from the public treasury."

It was a favourable time for all those who contribute to the enjoyments of the sense taste. Véry made his fortune; Achard laid the foundation of his; Beauvilliers made a third; and Madame Sullot,¹ whose shop in the Palais Royal was a mere pigeon-hole, sold every day as many as twelve thousand tarts.²

The effect still lasts. Foreigners flow in from every part of Europe to renew during peace those delightful habits they have contracted during war. They must come to Paris; and when they are there, they must be regaled at any price; and if French funds are in favour, it is perhaps less due to the higher interest they pay than to the instinctive confidence that foreigners can scarcely prevent placing in a people amongst whom the *gourmands* find so much happiness.³

¹ The names of MM. Véry, Achard, Beauvilliers, and Sullot are, I am sorry to say, no longer found in the Paris Directory (Bottin) for this year (1884). — Tr.

² When the army of invasion traversed Champagne, it took six hundred thousand bottles of wine from the cellars of M. Moët, of Epernay, well known for his excellent cellars. He consoled himself for this tremendous loss when he found that the thieves had retained a taste for his wines, and because he receives now from the North twice as many orders as before their visit.

³ The calculations whereon this article is based have been communicated to me by M. Jean-Marie Boscary, an aspiring gastronome, and who

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PORTRAIT OF A PRETTY FEMALE GOURMAND

58. *Gourmandise* is not unbecoming to women; it agrees with the delicacy of their organisation, and serves them as compensation for some of the pleasures they cannot enjoy, and for some hardships to which Nature seems to have condemned them.

Nothing is more pleasant to see than a pretty female *gourmand* under arms; her napkin is nicely adjusted; one of her hands rests on the table, the other carries to her mouth little morsels, beautifully carved, or the wing of a partridge that must be picked. Her eyes sparkle, her lips are glossy, her conversation is agreeable, and all her movements are graceful; she does not lack some spice of the coquetry which accompanies all that women do. With so many advantages she is irresistible, and Cato the Censor himself would feel moved by her influence.

ANECDOTE

Here I'll record what is for me a far from pleasing reflection.

One day I was most comfortably seated at the table beside a very pretty woman, and I was inwardly rejoicing at having so good a place, when turning suddenly towards me she said, "Your very good health, sir!" I commenced at once to thank her in most eloquent phraseology, but I did not finish my speech, as the coquette turning to her neighbour on the left said, "Let us clink glasses." They touched each other's glasses, and this abrupt transition seemed to me a perjury, and gave me a pang, which after many years is not yet cured.

is not in want of sufficient titles for this denomination, for he is a financier and a musical amateur.

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WOMEN ARE GOURMANDES

The desire of the fair sex for *gourmandise* is in some sort instinctive, because it is favourable to beauty.

A series of strictly exact observations has demonstrated that a succulent, delicate, and choice diet delays for a long time and keeps aloof the external appearances of old age.

It gives more brilliancy to the eye, more freshness to the skin, more support to the muscles; and as it is certain in physiology that it is the depression of muscles that causes wrinkles, these formidable enemies of beauty, it is equally true that, all things being equal, those who know how to eat are comparatively ten years younger than those ignorant of that science.

Painters and sculptors are deeply penetrated with this truth, for they never represent those who practise abstinence by choice or by duty, such as misers and anchorites, without giving to them the pathos of sickness, the leanness of misery, and the wrinkles of decrepitude.

EFFECTS OF GOURMANDISE ON SOCIABILITY

59. *Gourmandise* is one of the principal links of society; it extends gradually that spirit of conviviality which unites every day different classes, welds them into one whole, animates conversation, and softens the angles of conventional inequality.

It also justifies all the trouble the host takes to receive his guests properly, as well as their gratitude when they see he has so ably occupied himself with them. Now is the time to stigmatise for ever those senseless feeders who swallow with culpable indifference the nicest tit-bits, or who with sacrilegious carelessness inhale the "bouquet" of

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an odoriferous and clear wine. As a general maxim, every lofty and intelligent guest requires to be specially praised, and delicate compliments should always be paid wherever a desire to please has been shown.

INFLUENCE OF GOURMANDISE ON CONJUGAL HAPPINESS

Finally, *gourmandise*, when it is shared, has a most marked influence on the happiness which may be found in the conjugal state.

A married pair of *gourmands* have at least once a day a pleasant opportunity of meeting, for even those who have separate bedrooms — and in France there are a great number who have — eat at least at the same table, and have a subject of conversation which is always new; they speak not only of what they eat, but also of what they have eaten, what they will eat, what they have seen elsewhere, of fashionable dishes, new inventions, and so forth. Every one knows that such a familiar chit-chat is delightful.

Music, no doubt, has powerful attractions for those who love it; but one must set about it: — it is an exertion.

Besides, sometimes one has a cold, our music is mislaid, the instruments are out of tune, we may have a headache: — there is a strike.

On the other hand, a common want brings the couple to table; the same inclination retains them there; they naturally show each other those trifling attentions which denote a wish to oblige, and their behaviour at meal-time has a great share in the happiness of their lives.

This observation, though new in France, has not escaped the English moralist Richardson,¹ and he has worked out

¹ M. Brillat-Savarin says Fielding, but Fielding did not write *Pamela*. The mistake is the more astonishing as Richardson is well known in France. — Tr.

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the idea by painting in his novel of "Pamela" the different manner in which two married couples finish their day.

The first husband is a lord, the eldest son, and consequently possesses all the property of the family.

The second is his younger brother, the husband of Pamela, disinherited on account of his marriage, and being on half-pay, in straitened circumstances but little removed from abject poverty.

The lord and his lady enter the drawing-room by different doors and salute each other coldly, although they have not seen each other all day. They sit down at a table splendidly laid, surrounded by footmen in liveries resplendent with gold, help themselves in silence and eat without pleasure. Nevertheless, after the domestics have retired a sort of conversation is begun between them. This soon becomes bitter, degenerates into a quarrel, and they rise from the table in a rage, each to enter their own apartment, to meditate on the pleasures of widowhood.

The younger brother, on the other hand, on reaching his modest home is received with the most tender cordiality and the fondest caresses. He sits down to a frugal meal, but the fare placed before him could scarcely have been more excellent, for Pamela herself has prepared it. They eat with pleasure whilst conversing of their affairs, their projects, their love for each other. Half a bottle of Madeira serves to prolong their repast and conversation, and soon the same bed receives them; and after the transports of united love they forget in gentle slumber the present, and dream of a better future.

All honour, then, to *gourmandise* such as we describe it to our readers, so long as it does not divert men from their occupations or duties! For, as all the depravity of Sarda-

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napalus cannot induce us to abhor womankind, so the excesses of Vitellius will not make us turn our backs on a well-appointed banquet.

When *gourmandise* becomes gluttony, voracity, or debauchery, it loses its name and its advantages, escapes from our jurisdiction, and falls into that of the moralist, to be treated with advice, or of the physician, who will cure it by his remedies.

Gourmandise, such as the professor has characterised it in this article, has only a name in French; the Latin word *gula*, or the English *gluttony*, or the German *lüsterei*, do not describe it. We therefore advise those who are tempted to translate this instructive book to preserve this noun, and merely to change the article. This is what all nations have done with the word “coquetry” and with everything that refers to it.

NOTE OF A PATRIOTIC GASTRONOMER

I observe with pride that “coquetry” and *gourmandise*, by which good society has greatly modified our most imperious wants, are both of French origin.

MEDITATION XII

OF GOURMANDS

EVERY ONE WHO WISHES IT IS NOT A GOURMAND

60. THERE are individuals to whom Nature has refused that delicacy of organs, or that degree of attention, without which the most succulent dishes pass unobserved.

Physiology has already recognised the first of these varieties by showing us the tongue of these unfortunate beings badly provided with the nervous papillæ destined to inhale and to appreciate flavours; they only incite in them obtuse sensations; such persons are, with regard to taste, what the blind are with regard to light.

The second of these varieties is composed of absent-minded men, chatterboxes, persons engrossed in business or ambition, and others who want to occupy themselves with two things at the same time, and eat only to be filled.

NAPOLEON

Such, for example, was Napoleon; he was irregular in his meals, and ate fast and badly; but there also was to be discerned that absolute will which he carried into everything. The moment he felt hungry, it was necessary that he should be fed, and his establishment was so arranged that in any place and at any hour a chicken, cutlets, and coffee had to be served him as soon as wanted.

GOURMANDS BY PREDESTINATION

But there is a privileged class whom a material and organic predisposition summons to the enjoyments of taste.

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I have always been a disciple of Lavater and Gall, and I believe in innate tendencies.

Since there are some persons who have evidently come into the world to see badly, walk badly, and hear badly, because they are born near-sighted, cripples or deaf, why should there not be others who have been predisposed to feel more especially a certain series of sensations?

Moreover, the most ordinary observer may recognise every moment in society faces that bear the unmistakeable imprint of a ruling passion, such as supercilious impertinence, self-satisfaction, misanthropy, sensuality, and many others. Truly, a very expressionless face may indicate all this; but when the physiognomy is characteristic of resolution, it is very rarely delusive.

The passions act on the muscles, and very often, although a man is perfectly silent, the various sentiments that agitate him can be read in his face. This tension, if in the slightest degree habitual, leaves at last perceptible traces, and stamps thus the countenance with permanent and recognisable characteristics.

SENSUAL PREDISPOSITION

61. Those persons predisposed to *gourmandise* are generally of middling height. They have a round or broad face, bright eyes, a small forehead, a short nose, thick lips, and a rounded chin. The women are plump, pretty rather than beautiful, with a slight tendency to corpulence.

Chiefly those who are fond of tit-bits and dainties have refined features and a very delicate appearance; they are more graceful, and above all, are distinguished by a peculiar motion of the tongue.

It is especially amongst such persons that we must look

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for the most agreeable guests. They accept everything that is offered them, eat slowly and taste with discrimination. They never make any haste to leave those houses where they have been treated hospitably, but they stay the whole evening, because they know all the games and pastimes which are the ordinary accessories of a gastronomical gathering.

Those, on the contrary, to whom Nature has refused an aptitude for the gratifications of taste, are long-faced, long-eyed, and long-nosed; whatever may be their height, they appear somewhat lanky. They have dark and straight hair, and look always out of condition; they also have invented pantaloons.

The women whom Nature has afflicted with the same misfortune, are angular, feel themselves wearied at a dinner-table, and only live on cards and scandal.

This physiognomical theory will only, I trust, find few of my readers to contradict it, inasmuch as each can verify it from his own observations. I shall nevertheless give an instance to prove the truth of it.

One day I was present at a grand banquet, and opposite to me sat a pretty young lady who had a very sensuous countenance. I turned towards my neighbour, and whispered to him that with such features it was impossible for this lady to be anything else but a *gourmande*. "How absurd!" he replied; "she is scarcely fifteen years old, and has not yet reached the age of *gourmandise*. . . . However, let us watch."

The beginning was not in my favour, I was afraid of having compromised myself, for during the two first courses the young lady ate with a discretion that astonished me; and I thought we had fallen upon an exception, as there are

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some for every rule. But, finally, the dessert came, a dessert both magnificent and copious, and this revived my spirits. Nor did I hope in vain; not only did she eat of everything offered her, but she even had dishes brought to her that were at the other end of the table. In a word, she tasted everything, and my neighbour was surprised that so little a stomach should hold so many things. Thus my diagnosis was verified, and science triumphed once again.

A couple of years later I met the very same lady, a week after her marriage. She had become far more beautiful: showed a little coquetry, and displayed those charms permitted by fashion; she was delightful. Her husband was a sight to see, and resembled one of those ventriloquists who can laugh on one side of the face and cry on the other; that is to say, that he appeared very content to see his wife admired by every one, but was seized with a tremor of jealousy that was very apparent as soon as any one engaged in a serious flirtation with her. This last sentiment prevailed; he took his wife with him into a far-off department, and here, for me, ends her biography.

I made a similar observation on the Duke Decrès,¹ who for so long a time was Minister of Marine.

He was stout, short, of a dark complexion, had curly hair, and was broad-shouldered; he had a visage at least round, a protruding chin, thick lips, and the mouth of a giant. Thus I proclaimed him at once predestined to be a lover of good cheer and of the fair sex.

I whispered this physiognomical observation to a lady I thought very pretty, and whom I believed could keep a

¹ The Duke Decrès (1761–1820) managed the naval affairs of France from 1801 until the year 1815. After the battle of Aboukir he was for some time a prisoner of the English. — Tr.

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secret. Alas! I was wrong; she was a daughter of Eve, and my secret soon leaked out. That very evening, the scientific induction I had drawn from his features was told to the duke.

The next day I received a very nice letter from the minister, in which he modestly declined the two very excellent qualities I had discovered in him.

I did not consider myself beaten. I replied that Nature had made nothing in vain; that she had evidently created him to perform certain duties, and that if he did not do so, he would be acting contrary to his destiny; that anyhow, I had no right to expect such confidence, and so on.

Our correspondence was not continued; but a short time afterwards the newspapers told the whole of Paris that a furious battle had taken place between the minister and his cook, a battle which lasted for a long time, and was doubtful in its results, as the statesman had not always the best of it. Now, if after such an adventure the cook was not sent away — which he was not — I may, I think, draw the conclusion that the duke was absolutely overcome by the talents of such an artist, and that he despaired of finding another who knew so well how to flatter his taste; otherwise he would never have been able to conquer the very natural repugnance he must have felt at being attended on by so bellicose a servant.¹

Whilst I was writing the above, on a fine winter's evening, M. Cartier, formerly first violin at the Opera, and an able teacher, paid me a visit, and sate down at my fireside. I was full of my subject, and looked at him with attention. Then I said, "My dear professor, how does it happen that you are not a *gourmand*, when you have all the features of

¹ The history of this battle has not come down to posterity. — TR.

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one?" "I was once one of the best," he answered, "but now I abstain." "On principle?" I asked. He did not reply, but heaved a sigh after the manner of some of the heroes of Walter Scott — that is to say, almost a groan.

GOURMANDS BY VIRTUE OF THEIR PROFESSION

62. If there are gourmands by predestination, there are also others who become so by virtue of their calling. These latter can be divided into four grand categories: the moneyed classes, the doctors, the men of letters, and the pious people.

THE MONEYED CLASSES

The moneyed classes are the heroes of *gourmandise*. "Hero" is here the proper name, because some contests have been fought, and the high-born aristocracy would have crushed the moneyed classes beneath their titles and their escutcheons, if these latter had not opposed to them a sumptuous table and their strong boxes. The cooks fought the genealogists, and although some dukes made fun of their host even before they had left his house, they did come all the same, and their defeat was proved by their presence.

Besides, nearly all those who make much money with ease, are of necessity obliged to become *gourmands*.

Inequality of conditions implies inequality of riches, but inequality of riches does not imply inequality of wants, for he who can afford every day a dinner enough for a hundred persons, is often satisfied with eating the leg of a chicken. Hence, it is necessary for art to employ all its resources to reanimate that ghost of an appetite by dishes which maintain it without damaging it, and caress it without stifling

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it. Thus Mondor¹ became a *gourmand*, and thus *gourmands* have followed his example everywhere.

Therefore, in the whole series of dishes that are given in elementary cookery-books, there is always one or many that are called *à la financière*; it is also well known that formerly the first plate of green peas, of which the price was invariably eight hundred francs, or thirty-two pounds, was not eaten by the king, but by the farmers-general.²

Things have not much changed at the present day. On the tables of moneyed men is still to be found everything that is most perfect in nature, all that is early grown in hot-houses, and whatever is most exquisite in art; and people with historical names do not disdain to come to these banquets.

DOCTORS

63. Causes of a very different nature, although not less powerful, act on doctors; they become *gourmands* in spite of themselves, and must be made of cast iron to resist the force of circumstances.

The "dear doctors" are all the more warmly welcomed because health, which is under their patronage, is the most precious of all boons: thus they are "spoilt children" in every sense of the word.

Always waited for with impatience, they are received with eagerness; now, it is a pretty patient who invites them; then it is a young lady who caresses them; again, it is a

¹ Mondor, formerly a lackey, and then a purse-proud financier, a sort of French "Sir Gorgius Midas," is the hero of Colnet's (1768-1832) poem, *L'art de dîner en ville*. — TR.

² The *fermiers-généraux* were capitalists who paid a large sum to the French king for the right of collecting for him the taxes and various duties, on which they received a heavy percentage. — TR.

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father or a husband who recommends to them what they hold most dear. Hope attacks them on the right, gratitude on the left; they are fed like pet doves; they let things take their chance, and in six months the habit is confirmed, and they are *gourmands* past redemption.

I ventured one day to express this opinion at a banquet, in which I took part with eight others, and with Dr. Corvisart¹ as chairman. This was about the year 1806.

With the inspired tone of a Puritan preacher I cried, "Gentlemen, you are the last remnant of a body that formerly covered the whole of France. Alas! its members are destroyed or dispersed. There are no more farmers-general, *abbés*, *chevaliers*, Carmelite monks. The entire gastro-nomic body is now only to be found in the members of your profession. Support with firmness so great a responsibility, even if you were to share the fate of the three hundred Spartans at the pass of Thermopylæ."

Thus I spoke, no one made any complaint, and, to state the truth, we acted in accordance with my advice.

I observed at this dinner a fact that deserves to be known.

Dr. Corvisart, who could be very agreeable when he liked, only drank iced champagne. For this reason at the commencement of the dinner, while the other guests only occupied themselves in eating, he kept talking loudly and telling stories. At dessert, on the contrary, when the conversation began to be animated, he became serious, taciturn, and sometimes morose.

From this observation, confirmed by many others, I have deduced the following theorem: Champagne, which

¹ Jean Nicolas Corvisart-Desmarest (1755-1821), a celebrated physician, and doctor to the First Consul, who created him a baron.

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is exhilarating in its first effects, *ab initio*, is stupefying in those which follow, *in recessu*, a result, moreover, which is a well-known characteristic of the carbonic acid gas it contains.

OBJURGATION

64. Whilst I have hold of the regular practitioners, I must, before I die, reproach them with the extreme severity they use towards their patients.

As soon as any one has the misfortune to fall into their hands, he must listen to a long string of prohibitions, and renounce everything that is agreeable to his habits.

I protest against such interdictions as being for the greatest part useless.

I say "useless," because patients never long for what can hurt them.

A sensible doctor should never lose sight of the natural tendency of our inclinations, or forget that if painful sensations are fraught with danger by their very nature, those which are pleasant have a healthy tendency. We have seen a little wine, a cup of coffee, or a few drops of liqueur, call up a smile on the most Hippocratic faces.

Further, these severe prescribers must know very well that their prescriptions remain almost always without result; the patient attempts to escape taking them, and those about him find plenty of reasons for humouring him, and he does not die a minute sooner or later for it.

The medical allowance of a sick Russian in 1815 would have made a French market-porter drunk, and that of an Englishman would have satisfied a "Limousin";¹ nor was

¹ According to Rabelais's *Pantagruel* the Limousins or natives of Limôges had the reputation of being great drinkers. — TR.

OF GOURMANDS

any diminution possible, for the military inspectors were constantly going the round of our hospitals to examine the arrangements and the consumption of food.

I am the more confident in giving my opinion, as it is based on numerous facts, and as the most successful practitioners use every day a system which is something like it.

Canon Rollet, who died about fifty years ago, was a hard drinker according to the custom of those ancient times.

He fell ill, and the first words the doctor said were to forbid him to take wine in any form.

Nevertheless, at the very next visit, the doctor found the patient lying down, and at his bedside nearly complete evidence of his guilt, to wit, a table covered with a very white cloth, a crystal goblet, a handsome-looking bottle, and a napkin to wipe his lips.

At this sight he flew into a violent rage, and threatened to leave the house, when the wretched canon cried with a lamentable voice, "Ah, doctor, remember that when you forbade me to drink you did not forbid me the pleasure of looking at the bottle."

The doctor who attended M. Montlusin, of Pont-de-Veyle,¹ was even more cruel, for not only did he forbid the use of wine to his patient, but he also prescribed him to drink water in large doses.

A short time after the doctor's departure, Madame de Montlusin, anxious to obey medical orders, and to contribute to the recovery of her husband's health, offered him a large glass of the finest and clearest water.

The patient took it quietly, and began to drink it with resignation; but he stopped short at the first mouthful, and

¹ Pont-de-Veyle is a small town in the Department of the Ain, which department had the honour of giving birth to our author. — TR.

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handed back the glass to his wife, saying, "Take it, my dear, and keep it for another time; I have always heard it said one should never trifle with remedies."

MEN OF LETTERS

65. In the gastronomic dominions, the district of men of letters is very near that of the doctors.

In the reign of Louis XIV, men of letters were always hard drinkers; they conformed to the fashion of the day, and the memoirs of the period are very edifying on this subject. They are now *gourmands*, and this is really a great improvement.

I am far from being of the opinion of the cynic Geoffroy,¹ who used to say that modern works are deficient in power because authors only drink now *eau sucrée*.

On the contrary, I believe he made two mistakes, both in the fact and in its consequences.

The present age is rich in talents; they even harm one another because there is an excess of them, but posterity, which judges with more calmness, will see amongst them much to admire, just as we ourselves have done justice to the masterpieces of Racine and Molière, which were coldly received by their contemporaries.

The position of men of letters in society has never been more pleasant than at present.

They no longer live in the garrets in which they formerly were said to lodge; the fields of literature have become more fertile, and the stream of Hippocrene² rolls also over gold

¹ Julien Louis Geoffroy (1743-1814), a celebrated French writer and man of letters, who made himself known and feared by his theatrical criticisms in the *Journal des Débats*. — TR.

² The fountain of the Muses, produced by a stroke of the hoof of Pegasus. — TR.

OF GOURMANDS

dust. They are the equals of any one; they no longer hear the language of patronage, and to crown all, *gourmandise* bestows upon them her dearest favours.

Men of letters are invited because their talents are highly valued; because their conversation has, generally speaking, something piquant in it; and also because, for some time, it has been a rule for every dinner-party to have its literary man.

Those gentlemen always arrive a little late, but they are only received more cordially, as they have been long expected; they are petted so as to induce them to come again; and as they find all this extremely natural, they grow accustomed to it, and become and remain *gourmands*.

Things have gone so far that they have even caused a little scandal. Some prying people imagined that certain men of letters allowed themselves to be bribed by a breakfast, that some laudations were the result of a few *pâtés*, and that the doors of the Temple of Immortality could be opened with a fork.

But this was mere slander; these rumours have died out as many others have; what is done is well done, and I only mention it here to show that I am thoroughly acquainted with all that relates to my subject.

PIOUS PEOPLE

66. Finally, *gourmandise* counts many pious people among its most faithful followers.

By "pious people," *dévots* in French, we understand this word as it was used by Louis XIV and Molière, that is to say, those people whose sole religion consists in outward practices; real pious and charitable people have nothing to do with those.

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Let us consider how the vocation of *gourmands* comes to them.

Among persons who wish to work out their own salvation, the greatest number try to find the smoothest way. Those who flee from men, sleep on the bare ground, and wear hair-cloth next the skin, have always been and must ever be exceptions.

Now there are certain things which ought to be condemned without doubt, and never to be indulged in, such as balls, theatres, gambling, and other similar pastimes.

While these are considered abominable, as well as those who practise them, *gourmandise* presents itself and slips in in an entirely theological guise.

By right divine, man is the king of nature, and everything that the earth produces was created for him. It is for men that the quail is fattened, that Mocha has so agreeable an aroma, that sugar has such wholesome qualities.

Why should we not, then, use in moderation, and as it suits us, the goods that Providence offers us, especially if we continue to regard them as perishable objects, especially as they raise our gratitude towards the Author of all things.

Reasons not less weighty come to strengthen these. Perhaps we can scarcely receive too kindly those who have charge of our souls, and keep us in the way of salvation. Should we not make such meetings with so excellent an object as pleasant and, therefore, as frequent as we can?

Sometimes, also, the gifts of Comus arrive unexpectedly, perhaps sent by a former college chum, by an old friend, by a penitent who humbles himself, by a kinsman who wishes to be remembered by you, or by a person who is under some

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obligations to us, and wishes to be grateful. How can we refuse such offerings, or why should we not classify them? It is a mere matter of necessity.

Besides things did always happen in this way. The convents were real storehouses of the most charming delicacies, and this is one reason why certain connoisseurs regret them so bitterly.¹

Many monastic orders, especially the Bernardines, made a profession of good cheer. The cooks of the clergy attained the very limits of the art, and when M. de Pressigny, who died Archbishop of Besançon, returned from the conclave at the election of Pius VI,² he said that the best dinner he had had in Rome was with the head of the Capuchins.

CHEVALIERS AND ABBÉS

67. We cannot finish this article better than by honourably mentioning two classes of men whom we have seen in all their glory, and whom the Revolution has eclipsed — the *chevaliers* and the *abbés*.

What perfect *gourmands* these dear fellows were! It was impossible to make a mistake on casting a glance at their open nostrils, their wide-staring eyes, their moist lips, and their mobile tongues; nevertheless, each class ate in its own peculiar manner.

The *chevaliers* had something military in their attitude; they brought with a certain dignity their morsels to the lips, worked at them calmly, and looked straight at the

¹ The best French liqueurs were made at La Côte by the Visitandine nuns; those of Niort invented Angelica preserves; the orange-flower cakes of the sisters of Château-Thierry have been highly extolled; and at the Ursuline nunnery of Belley they had a receipt for walnuts preserved in sugar, which was a treasure of enjoyment and delicacy. I fear, alas! that this receipt is now lost to us.

² Pius VI (1717-99) was elected Pope in 1775. — Tr.

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master and at the mistress of the house with an approving glance.

The *abbés*, on the other hand, gathered themselves together to be nearer their plates; their right hands curved inwards like the claws of a cat who draws the chestnuts from the fire, whilst their faces beamed with enjoyment, and bore looks of concentration easier to conceive than to describe.

As three-fourths of the present generation have never seen anybody resembling the *chevaliers* and the *abbés* we have mentioned, and as it is nevertheless indispensable to know them to understand clearly many books written in the eighteenth century, we shall borrow from the author of the "Historic Treatise on the Duel" some pages that will fully explain this subject.¹

LONGEVITY OF GOURMANDS

68. To conclude; I am happy, and no one more so, at being able to give my readers some good news, namely, that good living is very far from being injurious to health, and that, all things being equal, *gourmands* live much longer than others.

This has been statistically proved in a very well-prepared paper, read recently before the Academy of Sciences, by Dr. Vulliermet.

He compares those ranks of society where they live well with those where people feed badly, and goes over the whole subject; he also compares with one another the various *arrondissements* of Paris, in some of which, generally, wealthy people live, whilst in the other the contrary takes place; for every one knows that there exists, in this respect,

¹ See "Varieties," no. xx.

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an enormous difference, as, for example, between the Faubourg Saint-Marceau and the Chaussée d'Antin.¹

Finally the doctor carries his researches to the departments of France, and compares with one another those that are more or less fertile. Everywhere the general result is that mortality diminishes in that same proportion as the means of subsistence improve; and, therefore, those who are unfortunate enough not to be able to feed well, may, at least, be sure that death will free them sooner from all their troubles.

The two extremes of this progression are that under the most favourable conditions of life only one individual in fifty dies in one year, whilst among those who are the most exposed to privations and misery, one at least among four dies in the same time.

Not those who always have excellent cheer are never ill. Alas! they also fall sometimes under the sway of the faculty, which usually qualifies them as "good patients"; but as they have a much larger dose of vitality, and as all parts of the organism are in better condition, Nature has more resources, and the body resists incomparably better the process of destruction.

This physiological truth is also supported by history, which informs us that whenever imperious circumstances, such as war, a siege, a bad season, have diminished the means of nourishment, that state of distress has always been accompanied by contagious diseases and a large increase of the death-rate.

The Lafarge Bank, so well known by Parisians, would undoubtedly have succeeded, if those who established it had

¹ When our author wrote, the Faubourg Saint-Marceau was the suburb where the generality of workmen dwelt, whilst the nobles and the rich inhabited the Chaussée d'Antin. — Tr.

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made to enter into their calculations the truth of the facts developed by Dr. Vulliermet.

They calculated mortality according to the tables of Buffon, Déparcieux,¹ and others, which are based on numbers taken from all classes and from all ages of the population. But as those who put their capital out at interest to keep something for the future have in general escaped the dangers of childhood, and as they are accustomed to a regular diet, well prepared and often nutritious, the death-rate was lower than was expected, their hopes were frustrated, and the *Tontine* completely failed.

Without doubt this has not been the only reason of the failure of the house of Lafarge, but it was an elementary one.²

For this last observation we are indebted to Professor Pardessus.³

M. de Belloy, Archbishop of Paris, who lived nearly a century,⁴ had a remarkable appetite. He loved good living, and I have seen many times his patriarchal countenance brighten up when any important dish was served. Napoleon showed him on all occasions marked deference and respect.

¹ Jean-Louis Leclerc, Count de Buffon (1707-88), a celebrated naturalist; Antoine Déparcieux (1703-68), a well-known mathematician. — TR.

² Joachim Lafarge was the creator of a savings bank known by the name of *Tontine viagère et d'amortissement*, based on the lives of the depositors, which, established in 1791, began its liquidation in 1809, and which, I believe, is not yet (1884) finished. — TR.

³ Jean-Marie Pardessus (1772-1853), one of the best lawyers of France, and a good scholar, was professor of commercial law at the Paris faculty in 1810, one year after the collapse of Lafarge, and made probably then the above observation to our author. — TR.

⁴ The Cardinal Jean Baptiste de Belloy, with the "patriarchal countenance," was born in 1709, and died in 1808, at the age of ninety-nine. — TR.

MEDITATION XIII

GASTRONOMIC TESTS

69. WE have seen in the preceding chapter that the distinctive characteristic of those who have more pretensions than right to the honours of *gourmandise* consists in this: that, with the best cheer before them, their eyes remain dull and their faces inanimate.

Such men are not worthy to have treasures lavished on them, of whose value they are unconscious. It, however, seemed very interesting to us to be able to discover them, point them out, and we have sought everywhere for information on a matter so important, as to how to classify your men and how to know your guests.

We set to work to find this out with an energy which ensures success, and it is to our perseverance we owe the advantage of presenting to the honourable body of hosts the discovery of "gastronomic tests," a discovery which will reflect credit on the nineteenth century. We understand by "gastronomic tests" dishes of acknowledged flavour, and of an excellence so undoubted that the mere sight of them ought to move, in a well-organised man, every faculty of taste; so that all those men whose faces, under such circumstances, neither flash with desire nor beam with ecstasy, may justly be noted as unworthy of the honours of the banquet, and its attending pleasures.

The method of tests carefully examined and deliberated in Grand Council, has been inscribed in a golden book in

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the following words, taken from a language that never changes: —

Utrumque ferculum, eximii et bene noti saporis, appositum fuerit, fiat autopsia convivæ, et nisi facies ejus ac oculi vertantur ad extasim, notetur ut indignus.

This has been translated as follows by the sworn translator of the Grand Council: —

“Each time, when a dish is served of a special and well-known flavour, the guests ought carefully to be observed, and those whose countenance does not beam with ecstasy, ought to be noted down as unworthy.”

The criterion of the power of such tests is relative, and ought to be suited to the faculties and the habits of the various classes of society. All circumstances being appreciated, they ought to be calculated to excite admiration and surprise; a test is a dynamometer of which the power ought to increase in proportion as we rise higher in the strata of society. Thus, a test destined for a man of limited means would not do for one of the principal clerks, and will be scarcely perceived when a select few dine together at a capitalist's or at a minister's.

In the enumeration we are about to make of the dishes that have been raised to the dignity of tests, we shall commence at the lowest grade, and afterwards gradually ascend to elucidate the theory, so that not only every one may use it with benefit, but that it may yet be possible to invent new ones based on the same principle, to bestow one's name on them, and to employ them in that sphere in which the inventor is fated to dwell.

We felt for a moment inclined to give here, as proofs and illustrations, the receipts for concocting the various preparations we indicate as tests, but we have abstained. We

GASTRONOMIC TESTS

thought it would be doing injustice to the several cookery-books that have appeared, including that of Beauvilliers, and quite recently "*Le Cuisinier des Cuisiniers*." ¹ We will simply refer our readers to these works as well as to those of Viard and Appert, observing that in the last mentioned are to be found various scientific informations previously unknown in works of this sort.

We regret that the public has not been able to appreciate a short-hand account of all that was said at the Council, when they deliberated on the tests. These deliberations will remain for ever secret and veiled; but there is, at least, one circumstance I am allowed to reveal.

Some members ² suggested negative tests, or tests by privation.

Thus, for example, let us suppose an accident, real or feigned, completely spoiling a dish of high flavour, or a hamper with game that has been sent by the carrier and has not come to hand. On the receipt of such disastrous news, we might observe and note the different degrees of sadness gradually stealing over the countenances of our guests, and thus we might acquire a good criterion of their gastronomic sensibility.

But this proposal, although seductive at the first glance, could not stand a thorough examination. The president observed, and observed rightly, that similar events, which

¹ All these cookery-books, including Beauvilliers' *L'Art du Cuisinier*, are now superseded, except *Le Cuisinier des Cuisiniers*, which is still in general use in France. — TR.

² M. Felix Sibuet, who, by his classical physiognomy, the delicacy of his taste, and his administrative talents, possesses all that is required to become a perfect financier. — BRILLAT-SAVARIN.

This gentleman, who has such peculiar requirements for a financier, was also a native of the department where our author was born, and had two brothers, of whom one was in his time a well-known journalist, the other a baron, and general of the first Empire. — TR.

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might only superficially affect the incomplete organs of people who do not care for good living, might exercise a fatal influence on true believers, and perhaps might give them a mortal fright. And thus, though the member still persisted in his proposal, it was unanimously rejected.

We proceed now to give a list of the dishes we think suitable to be used as gastronomic tests. We have divided them into three series, arranged gradually, according to the order and method indicated before.

GASTRONOMIC TESTS

First Series

For a presumed income of 5000 francs a year. (Mediocrity.)

A large fillet of veal, well larded with bacon, done in its own gravy.

A country-fed turkey stuffed with Lyons chestnuts.

Fattened pigeons larded and cooked to a turn.

Eggs dressed *à la neige*.

A dish of *sauerkraut* bristling with sausages and crowned with smoked Strasburg bacon.

Remarks: "Bless me! that looks all right! Come on! let us do honour to it!"

Second Series

For a presumed income of 15,000 francs. (Comfort.)

A fillet of beef underdone in the middle, larded and done in its own gravy.¹

A haunch of venison, accompanied by a gherkin sauce.

A boiled turbot.

A leg of mutton *présalé*, done *à la provençale*.²

¹ They have to lard beef in France, as it is generally very lean. — Tr.

² The legs of mutton *présalé*, in France, are simply delicious; they

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A truffled turkey.

Early green peas.

Remarks: "Ah, my dear friend, what a delightful sight. This is truly a wedding feast."¹

Third Series

For a presumed income of 30,000 francs or more. (Riches.)

A fowl of about seven pounds, stuffed with truffles till it becomes almost round.

An enormous Strasburg *pâté de foie-gras*, in the shape of a bastion.

A large Rhine carp *à la Chambord*, richly dressed and decorated.

Truffled quails with marrow, spread on buttered toast *au basilic*.

A river pike, larded, stuffed, and smothered in a cream of crayfish, *secundum artem*.

A pheasant done to perfection, with his tail-feathers stuck in, lying on toast *à la Sainte-Alliance*.

A hundred early asparagus, each half-an-inch thick, with sauce *à l'osmazôme*.

Two dozen ortolans *à la provençale*, as described in some of the cookery-books already mentioned.

A pyramid of vanilla and rose meringues. This dish has only some effect on ladies and on men with abbés' calves, etc.

Remarks: "Ah! sir (or, my lord), what a genius that cook

are very expensive, very small, and come from the Brittany sheep, who feed on pastures near the sea, covered with brine; hence the name.
— Tr.

¹ The original has the old French expression, *noces et festins*, already used by Rabelais, and our author states that in order to pronounce the first word correctly the *p* should be sounded. — Tr.

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of yours is! It is only at your table that we meet such dishes."

GENERAL OBSERVATION

In order that any test should produce its full effect, it should be served up in abundance. Experience, founded on a knowledge of human nature, has taught us that the rarest of savoury dishes loses its influence when not in excessive proportion, as the first impression which it produces on the guests is naturally checked by the fear of being stingily served, or, in certain cases, of being obliged to refuse out of politeness; such niggardliness often happens amongst people who wish to be extravagant and are miserly at heart.

I have many times had occasion to verify the effects of gastronomic tests. I shall quote one example, which, I trust, will be deemed sufficient.

I was present at a dinner of *gourmands*, all "pious people," where there were only two laymen, my friend J. R. and myself, and where amongst other things, an enormous virgin cock¹ of Barbezieux, stuffed with truffles almost to bursting, and a Strasburg *pâté de foie-gras*, looking like the fortress of Gibraltar, was brought to table.

¹ Men whose opinions are worth having, have assured me that the flesh of a virgin cock, if not more tender, has at least a more decided and better taste than that of a capon. I have too many duties to attend to in this lower world to try the experiment, which I leave to my readers; but I think that we may beforehand embrace their opinion, inasmuch as in the first of these meats is an element of sapidity which is wanting in the second.

A very clever lady told me that she knows *gourmands* by the way in which they pronounce the word "good" in such phrases as: "That's good! that's very good!" and some others like them. She assures me that the initiated give to this short monosyllable "good" an intonation of truth, of gentleness, and of enthusiasm which persons with palates incompletely organised can never attain.

GASTRONOMIC TESTS

This appearance produced on the company a marked effect difficult to describe, but somewhat like the "silent laugh" depicted in some of Cooper's novels, and I perceived that I should have something to observe. In fact, all conversation ceased through the fulness of their hearts. Every one was paying attention to the skilful operations of the carvers, and as soon as everybody had been served, I saw beam on the countenances of each, and in succession, the fire of desire, an ecstasy of enjoyment, and the repose of perfect bliss.

MEDITATION XIV

THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE

70. MAN is, without doubt, amongst the sentient beings that people our globe, the one who undergoes the most suffering.

Nature has originally condemned him to sorrow by the bareness of his skin, the form of his feet, and the instinct of war and destruction that accompanies the human race wherever it has been met.

Animals have not been stricken with this curse; and excepting some combats caused by the instinct of reproduction, pain would be absolutely unknown to the majority of animals in a state of nature; whilst man, who can only experience pleasure transiently and by a small number of organs, can at all times, and in every part of his body, suffer intense agony.

This decree of destiny has been aggravated in its fulfilment by a host of maladies, which are produced by the habits of social life; so that the most keen and the best regulated pleasure than can be imagined cannot either in intensity or duration make up for the atrocious pains that accompany certain disorders, such as gout, toothache, acute rheumatism, strangury, or that caused by the severe punishments amongst certain peoples.

This practical dread of pain has forced man, without being aware of it, to throw himself impulsively in an opposite direction, and to attach himself ingenuously to the small number of pleasures allotted to him by nature.

THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE

For this same reason he has increased, extended, fashioned, and finally worshipped them; for, in the idolatrous ages, for many centuries, all the pleasures were secondary deities, presided over by superior gods.

The severity of modern religions has destroyed all those patrons: Bacchus, Love, Comus, Diana, no longer exist except in poetical tradition; but the thing still exists, and, under the most serious of all forms of belief, men feast occasionally at a marriage, a baptism, and even a funeral.

ORIGIN OF THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE

71. Meals, in the sense that we give to this word, commenced in the second era of the human race, that is to say, when it ceased to live on fruits. The preparation and the distribution of foods rendered necessary a meeting of the family, when the heads distributed to their children the product of the chase, and adult children rendered in their turn the same service to their aged parents.

These meetings, limited at first to the nearest relations, little by little have been extended to neighbours and friends.

Later, and when the human race had spread, the weary traveller came and sate himself down at these primitive repasts, and related what had happened in distant countries. Thus hospitality was born, with its rights held sacred among all peoples; for there is no one, however savage, who does not consider it a duty to respect the life of him with whom he has consented to share bread and salt.

It was during such meals that languages were born or improved, either because it was an occasion for meeting one another which took place often, or because the leisure during and after repasts disposes naturally to confidence and to loquacity.

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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PLEASURE OF EATING, AND THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE

72. Such must have been, from the nature of things, the mainsprings of the pleasures of the table, which we must distinguish from the pleasures of eating, its necessary antecedent.

The pleasure of eating is the actual and direct sensation of a want which is satisfied.

The pleasure of the table is a reflex sensation that arises from the various circumstances of facts, places, things, and persons present during the repast.

The pleasure of eating we have in common with animals; it only supposes hunger, and what is necessary to satisfy it.

The pleasure of the table is peculiar to the human species; it supposes care bestowed beforehand on the preparations of the repast, on the choice of the place and the assemblage of guests.

The pleasure of eating requires, if not hunger, at least appetite; the pleasure of the table is most often independent of both.

These two different kinds of pleasure can always be observed in our banquets.

At the first course, at the commencement of the meal, every one eats eagerly without speaking, without paying attention to what is said; and whatever the rank may be the guest occupies in society, everything is forgotten, and he becomes merely a workman in the grand manufactory. But when the natural wants are satisfied, reflection arises, conversation begins, another order of things is inaugurated, and he who has hitherto been merely a consumer becomes

THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE

a more or less agreeable guest, according to the means which the Master of all things has bestowed upon him.

EFFECTS

73. The pleasures of the table do not consist in ravishing delight, ecstasies, or transports; but they gain in duration what they lose in intensity, and are especially distinguished by the particular privilege they enjoy of disposing us to all others, or at least of consoling us for their loss.

In fact, at the end of a good dinner, both body and soul enjoy a particular happiness.

Physically, whilst the brain is enlivened, the physiognomy brightens, the colour rises, the eyes sparkle, and a pleasant warmth is diffused in every limb.

Morally, the intelligence becomes sharpened, the imagination warms, and witticisms arise and circulate; and if La Fare and Sainte-Aulaire¹ descend to posterity with a reputation of being authors brimful of wit, they owe it above all to the fact that they were pleasant guests.

Moreover, we often find assembled round the same table all the modifications that a highly developed sociability has introduced amongst us — love, friendship, business, speculation, influence, solicitations, patronage, ambition, intrigue. This is why conviviality affects everything: this is why it produces fruits of every savour.

ARTIFICIAL ACCESSORIES

74. An immediate consequence of these antecedents is that the concentration of the whole human industry tends

¹ Charles Auguste, Marquis de la Fare (1614–1712), wrote some fugitive pieces of poetry and several memoirs. François-Joseph de Beaupoil, Marquis de Sainte-Aulaire (1643–1742), is known by a few

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to augment the duration and the intensity of the pleasures of the table.

Poets complain that the neck is too short, and therefore, a hindrance to the duration of the pleasure of taste; others deplore the small capacity of the stomach, and some even have spared it the duty of digesting the first meal, in order to have the pleasure of swallowing a second.

This was the supreme effort attempted in order to increase the enjoyments of taste; but if, in that direction, men were unable to cross the limits fixed by Nature, they devoted themselves to the accessories which at least offered us more scope.

Vases and glasses were ornamented with flowers, which flowers also crowned the guests: they ate under the vault of Heaven in gardens, in groves, in the presence of all the marvels of Nature.

To the pleasure of the table were joined the charms of music and the sound of instruments. Thus, while the courtiers of the king of the Phæacians regaled themselves, the singer Phæmius celebrated the deeds of the warriors of past times.¹

Often, too, dancers, acrobats, and mimes of both sexes and in every costume, came to occupy the eyes without lessening the pleasures of taste; the most exquisite perfumes were spread around. Guests were even waited upon by beauty unveiled, so that every sense was appealed to, and enjoyment became universal.

I might fill many pages to prove what I advance. Greek madrigals and other poetic trifles, and, on the strength of these, was elected a member of the French Academy, in his sixtieth year. — TR.

¹ In Homer's *Odyssey*, the inhabitants of Corcyros are called Phæacians, after their king Alcinoös, the son of Phæax. Phæmius was an Ionian poet, and one of Penelope's suitors. — TR.

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and Roman authors as well as our old chronicles are at hand to copy from; but these researches have been already made, and my easy erudition would have little merit. I therefore give as facts what other authors have proved: it is a right that I shall use often, and for which the reader will thank me.

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

75. We have adopted, more or less according to circumstances, various methods of enjoyment, and by new discoveries we have somewhat increased their number. No doubt the delicacy of our manners could not permit the "vomitoria" of the Romans; but we have done better, and have accomplished the same object by a method allowed by good taste.

Dishes of such attractive flavours have been invented that they unceasingly renew the appetite; they are at the same time so light, that they flatter the palate without loading the stomach. Seneca would have called them *nubes esculentas*.

We have, indeed, arrived to such a point in cookery, that if the calls of business did not force us to rise from the table, or if the want of sleep did not so frequently interpose, the duration of repasts would be almost unlimited, and there would be no certain evidence for finding out what time might elapse between the first glass of Madeira and the last glass of punch.

Besides, it must not be thought that all these accessories are indispensably necessary to constitute the pleasures of the table. We may enjoy this pleasure in nearly all its extent, every time when the four following conditions are combined: cheer, at least passable, good wine, pleasant guests, and plenty of time.

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Thus, I often wished I had been present at the frugal repast that Horace destined for the neighbour he would have invited, or for the guest whom bad weather had obliged to seek shelter under his roof; namely, a fine fowl, a kid, probably fat, and a dessert of raisins, figs, and walnuts. With these dishes, some wine of the Manlius vintage (*nata mecum consule Manlio*), and the conversation of this voluptuous poet, methinks I should have enjoyed a most comfortable supper.

“But when some neighbour, after long delay,
Came to me idle on a rainy day,
A grateful guest, we feasted, well content
With chicken and a kid, and never sent
For fish to town, but dined, and often tried
A nut, a double fig, and grape well dried.”¹

It is thus that at any time, yesterday or to-morrow, half a dozen friends may regale on a boiled leg of mutton and kidneys of Pontoise,² washed down with some limpid wine of Orléans and Médoc, and spend the evening in talk, full of freedom and enjoyment, and in entire forgetfulness of more elegant dishes and more skilful cooks.

On the contrary, however choice may be the good cheer, however sumptuous may be its accessories, there can be no pleasure at the table if the wines are bad, the guests brought together without discrimination, the faces sad, and the dinner eaten hurriedly.

A SKETCH

“But,” the impatient reader will probably exclaim, “how then, in this year of grace 1825, is any feast to be

¹ Horace, *Satires*, bk. II, sat. 2. — Tr.

² One of the largest cattle-markets of France was held at Pontoise, a town in the department of Seine-et-Oise. — Tr.

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spread so as to unite all the conditions necessary to the highest pleasures of the table?"

I will answer this question. Readers, please be attentive: Gasterea,¹ the fairest of the muses, inspire me; I shall be as clear as an oracle, and my precepts will live for centuries:—

Let the number of guests not exceed twelve, so that the conversation may be constantly general.

Let them be so chosen that their occupations are various, their tastes analogous, and with such points of contact that one need not have recourse to that odious formality of introductions.

Let the dining-room be brilliantly lighted, the cloth as white as snow, and the temperature of the room from sixty to sixty-eight degrees of Fahrenheit.

Let the men be witty and not pedantic, and the women amiable without being too coquettish.²

Let the dishes be exquisitely choice, but small in number, and the wines of the first quality, each in its degree.

Let the dishes be served from the more substantial to the lighter; and from the simpler wines to those of finer bouquet.

Let the eating proceed slowly, the dinner being the last business of the day, and let the guests look upon themselves as travellers who journey together towards a common object.

Let the coffee be hot, and the liqueurs be specially chosen.

Let the drawing-room to which the guests retire, be large enough to permit those who cannot do without it, to have a game of cards, while leaving, however, ample scope for post-prandial conversation.

Let the guests be detained by social attraction, and animated with expectation that before the evening is over, there will be some further enjoyment.

Let the tea not be too strong, the toast artistically buttered, and the punch made with care.

Let the signal for departure not be given before eleven o'clock.

Let every one be in bed at midnight.

If any man has ever been a guest at a repast uniting all these conditions, he can boast of having been present at his

¹ An invocation to this Muse is found in Meditation xxx. — TR.

² I write this in Paris, between the Palais-Royal and the Chaussée d'Antin.

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own apotheosis; and he will have enjoyed it the less in proportion as these conditions have been forgotten or neglected.

I have already said that the pleasure of the table, as I have described it, is susceptible of rather a long duration; I am about to prove this by giving a true and circumstantial account of the longest repast I ever made in my life. This is a sweetmeat I present to the reader to recompense him for the courteous attention he devotes to my Handbook.

Here it is: —

At the bottom of the Rue de Bac in Paris there lived a family, of which the members, relatives of mine, were: Dr. Dubois, seventy-eight years old; the captain, seventy-six years; and their sister Jeannette, seventy-four. I often went to visit them, and they always received me most kindly.

“By Jove,” said the doctor one day, rising on tip-toe to tap me on the shoulder, “you have for a long time been bragging about your *fondues*, or eggs beaten up with cheese; you continually made our mouths water; it is time to put a stop to all this. We will come, the captain and myself, and breakfast with you some day, and we shall see what sort of thing this dish is.” (It was about the year 1801, I think, that he thus teased me.) “I shall be most happy,” I replied, “and you shall have one in all its glory, for I shall make it myself. Your proposal delights me. So tomorrow at ten, military punctuality.”

At the hour appointed, I saw both my guests arrive, clean shaven, their hair nicely arranged and well powdered; two little old men still hale and hearty. They smiled with pleasure on seeing the table laid, with a snow-white

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tablecloth, and in each one's place two dozen oysters with a bright golden lemon. At each end of the table stood a bottle of Sauterne, carefully wiped, excepting the cork, which showed distinctly that it had been in the cellar for a long while. Alas! I have seen disappear, or nearly so, those breakfasts, formerly so common and so cheerful, where oysters were swallowed by thousands. They have disappeared with the abbés who never ate less than a gross, and with the chevaliers who never stopped. I regret them but as a philosopher: for time modifies governments, and, therefore, must greatly influence simple social usages.

After the oysters, which were quite fresh, came some broiled kidneys, a terrine of *foie-gras*, a pie with truffles, and finally the *fondue*.

The different ingredients had all been assembled in a stewpan, which was placed on the table over a chafing-dish, heated with spirits of wine. I commenced operations on the field of battle, and my cousins did not lose a single one of my movements.

They were loud in the praise of this preparation, and asked me to let them have the receipt, which I promised them, telling them at the same time two anecdotes which the reader will probably read farther on.

After the *fondue* came the fruits in season and sweets, a cup of genuine Mocha, made *à la Dubelloy* — a way of preparing coffee which begins to be known — and finally two sorts of liqueurs, one a spirit for cleansing, and the other an oil for softening.

The breakfast over, I proposed to my guests to take a little exercise, and to take a turn round my room, a room which, without being sumptuous is pretty large and comfortable, and where my friends would find themselves so

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much the more at home, as ceilings and gildings date from the reign of Louis XV.

I showed them the original bust of my handsome cousin, Madame Récamier,¹ by Chinard, and her portrait in miniature by Augustin. They were so delighted with it that the doctor, with his thick lips, kissed the portrait, and the captain took on the bust a somewhat similar liberty for which I boxed his ears, for, if every admirer of the original were to do the same, this bosom, so voluptuously rounded, would soon be in the same state as the big toe of St. Peter's at Rome which the pilgrims have kissed so much that they have shortened it.

I afterwards showed them casts of the best ancient sculptures, some paintings not without merit, my guns, my musical instruments, and several beautiful editions of French and foreign works.

In this polymathic voyage they did not forget the kitchen, where I showed them my economical stock-pot, my roasting apparatus, my clock-work turn-spit and my vapouriser. They examined everything with minute curiosity, being the more astonished as, at their own homes, everything was still done as it used to be in the time of the Regency.²

At the moment when we were about to enter the drawing-room it struck two o'clock. "Confound it!" cried the doctor, "this is our dinner hour, and our sister Jeannette will be waiting for us; we must go; I do not feel very hun-

¹ Madame Récamier (1777-1849), a celebrated beauty in French society, is well known by the illustrious friends, such as Chateaubriand, Ballanche, and others, who used to visit her at her seat at the Abbaye-au-Bois. — Tr.

² The Regency, the time when the dissolute Duke, Philip of Orléans, governed France during the minority of Louis XV, is from 2d September, 1715, till 16th February, 1723. — Tr.

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gry, but I always like to have a plate of soup about this time. This is such an old habit, that if a day passes without taking it, I say with Titus: *Diem perdidit*!" "My dear doctor," I answered him, "why go so far to find that which you have close at hand? I shall send some one to my cousin to tell her that you are staying a little longer with me, and that you do me the honour of sharing my dinner, for which, I trust, you will make some allowances, as it will not have all the merits of an impromptu got up in plenty of leisure-time."

Then an ocular consultation was held by the two brothers, followed by formal consent. I at once sent a messenger to the Faubourg Saint-Germain; I gave a hint to my cook, and after a very reasonable interval, what with his own resources, and what with those of the neighbouring restaurants, he served us up a little dinner very well prepared, and very nice.

It gave me great gratification to see the self-possession and coolness with which my two friends sat down, unfolded their napkins, and made ready to begin.

They met with two surprises, which I myself did not anticipate, Parmesan served with the soup, and a glass of dry Madeira afterwards. These two novelties had recently been imported by Prince Talleyrand,¹ the first of our diplomatists, to whom we owe so many delicate, witty, and profound sayings, and to whom the public always looked with special interest, whether he was in power or in retirement.

¹ Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, Prince of Benevent (1754-1838), began life as Bishop of Autun, became a celebrated diplomatist, and was for a long period French Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was married to Mrs. Grant, the widow of an Englishman, and a lieutenant in the service of the former East India Company. — Tr.

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Dinner passed very comfortably, as well in its substantial part as in the accessories, and my friends were both agreeable and merry.

After dinner I proposed a game of cards which my guests refused, preferring the *far niente* of the Italians, as the captain said; so we seated ourselves around the fireplace.

In spite of the charms of the *far niente*, I have always thought that nothing enhances more the pleasures of conversation than any occupation that does not engross the attention, so I proposed a cup of tea.

Tea was then a novelty to French people of the old school. Nevertheless, it was accepted. I made it in their presence, and they took several cups with all the more pleasure, as they had always considered it a kind of medicine.

A long experience has taught me that one indulgence begets another, and that as soon as a man has once entered this path, he loses the power of refusing. Thus it was in an almost imperative tone that I proposed to finish with a bowl of punch. "You will kill me," said the doctor. "You will make us drunk," said the captain. To which I only replied by shouting for lemons, sugar, and rum.

I then made the punch, and while I was so occupied, I ordered some very thin slices of toast with some nice salt butter to be got ready. This time my cousins made some objections. They assured me that they had already eaten enough, that they could not touch them; but as I knew well enough the attraction of this simple dish, I replied that I only hoped there would be enough. And, in fact, a short time after the captain took the last slice of toast, and I observed him look to see whether there was not some toast

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left, or if no more were forthcoming, so I sent immediately for another supply.

Meanwhile time had not stood still, and my clock showed that it was past eight. "We really must go," said my guests; "we really must go, and take a little salad with our poor sister, who has not seen us all day,"

To that I made no objection, and faithful to the duties of hospitality towards two such agreeable old gentlemen, I accompanied them to their carriage and saw them leave.

Some one will ask whether one did not feel bored at any time during so long a sitting. I answer in the negative; the attention of my guests was kept up by the preparation of the *fondue*, by the walk through my room, by some novelties in the dinner, by the tea, and, above all, by the punch, which they had never before tasted.

Besides, the doctor knew the pedigrees of all the Parisians and several anecdotes about them. The captain had spent part of his life in Italy, both as a military man and as an envoy at the Court of Parma; and I myself have travelled much. We talked without pretence, and listened to each other with pleasure. No more is needed to make time pass pleasantly and quickly.

Next morning I received a note from the doctor, to tell me that the little debauch of the previous day had done his brother and him no harm, but, on the contrary, that after a pleasant sleep they had risen fresh, hearty, and quite willing to begin anew.

MEDITATION XV

HALTS OF A SHOOTING PARTY

76. AMID all the circumstances of life, when eating is considered as something important, one of the most delightful is undoubtedly halts for luncheon at a shooting-party. Of all known pauses, this is the only one that can be prolonged to any extent without becoming tiresome.

After some hours of exercise, the most vigorous sportsman feels a want of rest. His face has been caressed by the morning breeze; he has shown his skill as opportunity offered, the sun is near the loftiest point of its course, therefore the sportsman is going to halt for several hours, not from excess of fatigue, but from that instinctive impulse that teaches him that all human activity has its limits.

Shade attracts him; he reclines on the turf, and the murmur of a neighbouring source invites him to dip in it the flask intended to quench his thirst.¹

Thus placed, he takes out with a tranquil pleasure the little golden-crust ed rolls, uncovers the cold fowl some friendly hand has stowed in his bag, and puts quite near it the piece of Gruyère or Roquefort cheese, which is to represent the dessert.

While the sportsman makes these preparations he is not alone; he is accompanied by the faithful animal that Heaven has created for his use. His crouching dog looks affectionately at his master. A joint labour has filled up

¹ I advise my fellow-sportsmen to drink white wine; it resists better the shaking and the heat, and quenches thirst more pleasantly.



LA PÊCHE

HALTS OF A SHOOTING PARTY

the gap which separated them; they are two friends, and the servant is both happy and proud to become his master's guest.

Theirs is an appetite equally unknown to worldlings and pious people: to the first, because they do not allow hunger time to come, to the latter, because they never give themselves up to the exercises which produce it.

The meal has been taken with delight; each has had his share, and everything has gone on in order and peace. Why should one not take a nap for a short while? Noon is also an hour of rest for the whole creation.

These simple pleasures are increased tenfold if shared by many friends, for, in that case, a more copious repast has been brought into those military canteen-boxes, now employed in a more pleasant manner, and people talk gaily of the prowess of one, the blunders of another, and their expectations for the afternoon.

What would it be, then, if attentive servants should arrive laden with those vases consecrated to Bacchus, in which an artificial cold freezes at one and the same time Madeira, the juice of the strawberry and of pineapples; these delicious drinks, these divine preparations, which send through the veins a delightful freshness, and carry in every direction a luxury unknown to the profane.¹

¹ My friend Alexandre Delessert was the first who put into use this practice, full of pleasure.

We were shooting at Villeneuve under a burning sun, the thermometer was about 72° Fahrenheit in the shade.

Thus transported to the torrid zone, he took care to let his servants meet us with leather bags full of ice, in which was everything that could be desired, either to refresh or comfort us. We made our choice and felt ourselves revive.

I am tempted to believe that the application of so fresh a liquid to thirsty tongues and parched throats causes the most delicious sensation that may be tasted without committing any sin.

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But even this is not the limit of the ascending series of enchantments.

THE LADIES

77. There are days when our wives, our sisters, our cousins, and their lady friends, are invited to take part in our amusements.

At the appointed hour we see arrive light carriages and prancing horses, loaded with the fair, all feathers and flowers. The style in which these ladies are dressed is somewhat military and coquettish, and the eye of the professor can from time to time catch a glimpse of things which was not left to chance alone.

Soon the doors of the carriages are opened, and disclose the treasures of Périgord, the marvels of Strasburg, the dainties of Achard, and all that could be transported from the most skilled culinary laboratories.

Nor is the impetuous Champagne forgotten, which is held by the hand of the fair. Seated on the green turf they eat, the corks fly; they gossip, laugh, and are merry in perfect freedom, for the universe is their drawing-room, and the sun their lamp. Besides, appetite, this emanation from Heaven, lends to this repast a vivacity unknown indoors, however prettily adorned such homes may be.

Everything, however, must have an end; the oldest person gives the signal; all rise, the men take up again their guns, and the ladies their hats; good-bye has been said, the carriages drive up, and the ladies fly away not to be seen again until the close of day.

This is what I have seen in the higher classes of society, where Pactolus¹ rolls along; but all this is not indispensable.

¹ The Pactolus was a river of Lydia in Asia Minor, in which Midas,

HALTS OF A SHOOTING PARTY

I have been out shooting in the centre of France and in the most remote parts of certain departments, and seen arrive at the halt charming women, young girls redolent with freshness, some in cabriolets, others in simple country-carts or even on a humble donkey, an animal to which the inhabitants of Montmorency¹ owe both fame and fortune; I have seen them the first in laughing at the inconveniences of their conveyance; I have seen them display on the lawn a turkey in clear jelly, a pie made at home, a salad quite ready for mixing; I have seen them dancing with a light foot around the bivouac-fire lighted on this occasion; I have taken part in the games and the merriment that accompany such a gipsy-feast, and I feel thoroughly convinced that with less luxury than in the first case people are just as delighted, as gay, and have as much pleasure.

Why, when they take their leave, should not some kisses be interchanged with the best sportsman, who is in his glory; with the worst shot, because he is most unlucky, with the others, so as not to make them jealous? All are about to separate, custom has authorised it; and it is permissible, and even commanded, to take advantage of such an opportunity.

Fellow-sportsmen, ye who are prudent and look after solid things, fire straight, and bag as much as you can before the ladies arrive, for experience teaches us that after their departure sportsmen seem very rarely in luck.

Plenty of conjectures have been brought forward to ex-

King of Phrygia, who turned to gold everything he touched, was ordered to bathe so that he might get rid of his fatal gift. Ever after, according to Greek mythology, this river rolled over golden sands. — TR.

¹ A village in the neighborhood of Paris, well known for its donkey-rides at the time our author wrote. There are now hardly any quadrupeds left. — TA.

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plain this fact. Some attribute it to digestion going on, which always renders the body more or less heavy; others to the attention of the sportsmen being so diverted that they cannot easily collect their thoughts; some again to some confidential communications which may have inspired a desire of coming back very quickly.

As for us, "who can read the innermost thoughts," we think that when the ladies are young and fair, and the sportsmen inflammable, there may possibly, through the meeting of different sexes, be generated some genetic spark which scares away the chaste Diana, so that in her displeasure she withdraws for the rest of the day her favours from those who have offended her.

We say "for the rest of the day," for the history of Endymion¹ has taught us that the goddess is far from being so stern after the sun has set. (See the picture by Gérard.)²

Halts during shooting, whilst luncheon is going on, are a virgin soil we have only touched upon. They may become the subject of a treatise as amusing as instructive. We leave it to the intelligent reader who wishes to occupy himself therewith.

¹ Diana, the goddess of the chase, was inexorable to those who fell in love with her; but when represented by the moon, as Silene, she "sleeps with Endymion, and would not be awaked." Endymion, according to Greek mythology, was the sunset, condemned to everlasting youth, with whom the moon is in love. — TR.

² François Gérard (1770–1837), a celebrated painter, and one of the best pupils of David, the well-known French artist, was created a baron in 1819. One of his best paintings is *Diana and Endymion*. — TR.

MEDITATION XVI

ON DIGESTION

78. "WE do not live by what we eat," says an old proverb, "but by what we digest." We must then digest in order to live, and this necessity is a law which makes its power be felt by rich and poor, by the shepherd and the king.

But how few people know what is going on when they digest. Most men are like M. Jourdain,¹ who spoke in prose without being aware of it, and it is on their account that I shall give a popular account of digestion, as I feel certain that M. Jourdain was much more satisfied when assured by the philosopher that what he spoke was certainly prose.

To understand digestion in its entirety, we must connect it with its antecedents and its consequences.

INGESTION

79. Appetite, hunger, and thirst, warn us that the body needs to be restored, and pain, that universal monitor, is not slow in tormenting us if we do not wish or cannot obey it.

Hence eating and drinking, which constitute ingestion, an operation that commences at the moment when liquids

¹ M. Jourdain is the chief character in Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. He is an elderly tradesman who has suddenly become affluent, and who, in order to educate himself, engages dancing-masters, fencing-masters, teachers of philosophy, etc. When one of the latter tells him the difference between poetry and prose, M. Jourdain says he never knew he had been talking prose all his life till his professor told him. — TR.

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arrive in the mouth, and finishes when they enter the œsophagus.¹

During this passage, which is only a few inches long, many things occur.

The teeth divide and comminute the solid food; the various glands that cover the inner mouth moisten it; the tongue turns about the food to mix it, and presses it then against the palate to express the juice and to relish its savour. In performing this function, the tongue unites the food in a pulpy mass in the middle of the mouth; and then, supporting itself against the lower jaw, it lifts up its central portion, so that it forms at its root a declivity through which the food slips into the back part of the mouth, where it is received by the pharynx, which, contracting in its turn, propels it into the œsophagus, of which the peristaltic motion conducts it into the stomach.

One mouthful being thus treated, a second follows in the same manner; the liquids swallowed in the moments of rest take the same route, and deglutition continues until the same instinct that we have called ingestion warns us that it is time to conclude. But it is rare that one obeys the first injunction, for one of the privileges of the human species is that of drinking without being thirsty. In the existing state of the culinary art, cooks make us eat without being hungry.

Every bit which arrives at the stomach has escaped, through a very remarkable contrivance, two dangers.

The first is, that it should pass into the nasal fossa; but happily the hanging down *velum palati* and the construction of the pharynx oppose this.

¹ The œsophagus is the canal that commences behind the windpipe and leads from the gullet to the stomach; the upper end is termed pharynx.

ON DIGESTION

The second danger is, that it should fall into the wind-pipe, over which all our food passes. This would be much more serious, for, as soon as any foreign body enters the windpipe, a convulsive cough sets in, which does not end till it is thrown out.

But by an admirable mechanism, the glottis is closed when we swallow. It is defended by the epiglottis, which covers it, and we possess a certain instinct which leads us to refrain from breathing while we swallow. So that generally we may say that, in spite of this strange conformation, food arrives rapidly in the stomach, which is not swayed by the will, and where digestion properly so-called commences.

THE DUTY OF THE STOMACH

80. Digestion is a purely mechanical operation, and the digestive apparatus may be considered as a mill furnished with its sieves, in order to extract from the food all that can be of use to repair our body, and to reject the residue deprived of its animalisable parts.

Long and vigorous disputes have been going on as to the manner in which digestion takes place in the stomach, and whether it is by coction, maturation, fermentation, by chemical, vital or gastric dissolution, etc.

A little of all these operations takes place, and the error was in attributing to one agent what was the result of several causes necessarily combined.

In fact, foods, impregnated by the various fluids supplied by the mouth and the œsophagus, arrive in the stomach, where they are impregnated by the gastric juice which is always there; they are submitted for several hours to a temperature of about 100° of Fahrenheit; then they are

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trituated and mixed by the organic motion of the stomach, which is stimulated by their being there; they react on one another through this juxtaposition, and it is impossible that then fermentation should not take place, as every kind of food ferments.

In consequence of all these operations, chyme is elaborated, the alimentary layer immediately above is the first that is appropriated; it passes along the pylorus and falls into the intestines; another layer succeeds it, and so on, until there is nothing more in the stomach, which empties itself as it were by mouthfuls, and in the same manner in which it was filled.

The pylorus is a sort of fleshy funnel which serves as a communication between the stomach and the intestines; it is formed in such a manner that food cannot reascend it without great difficulty. This important *viscus* is sometimes subject to obstruction, and then people die of hunger after a long and frightful agony.

The intestine which receives the food that leaves the pylorus is called the duodenum; it is so called because it is about twelve fingers' breadth in length.

The chyme, arrived in the duodenum, receives a new elaboration by the mixture of intestinal juice, bile and pancreatic juice; it loses its greyish colour and the acidity it formerly possessed, becomes yellowish, and begins to assume a stercoraceous odour, which increases the more it moves towards the rectum. The various principles of this combination act reciprocally on each other; the chyle is prepared, and many analogous gases are formed.

The organic movement of impulsion which drives the chyle out of the stomach, continues and propels it towards the smaller bowels, where the chyle is set free, is absorbed

ON DIGESTION

by the organs destined for this use, and is carried towards the liver to be mixed with the blood, which it refreshes by repairing the losses caused by the absorption of vital organs, and by transpiratory exhalation.

It is very difficult to explain how chyle, which is a white liquor almost without taste or smell, can be extracted from a mass of which the colour, smell, and taste, are very marked.

However, the extraction of chyle appears to be the real object of digestion, and as soon as it enters the circulation, the individual becomes aware of it by the conscious increase of vital force and an intimate conviction that his bodily losses are repaired.

After this operation, the chyme, deprived of its humours, and almost reduced to excrementitious substance, journeys on towards the outside; it is propelled by the organic, peristaltic and vermicular motion common to the whole digestive system, which makes it move by an oblique movement from one wall of the intestines to another — a process favoured by the various liquids that lubricate it.

It goes successively from the jejunum to the ileum, from the ileum to the cæcum, from the cæcum to the colon, and from the colon to the rectum, thus going over a route that sometimes is more than thirty feet long, that is to say, nearly six times the height of a human being.

In this downward journey, the chyme, although always rather liquid, gradually takes a yellowish brown colour. Arrived in the cæcum, it becomes more or less stercora-ceous and increases in consistency, either through the temperature of the intestines, or through their recrementitial absorption.

The excrementitious substance arrives at the end of the

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rectum, and is stopped there by the resistance of the sphincter, a circular muscle that closes the entry, almost like the string of a bag-purse. There it is obliged to stop several hours more or less, according to the particular disposition of the individual.

Nevertheless two causes soon concur to eject it; it is propelled by other excrementitious substances that take the same route, and the excitation its presence produces makes those intestines constrict which can be moved by the action of will. The *caput mortuum* obeys these movements, forces the sphincter, moulds itself on its opening, is expelled and does not leave us without a sensation of pleasure, bestowed by Nature on the satisfaction of any want.

The intestines are the home of tempests; in them is formed gas, as in the clouds; oxygen is found in them, whilst the fat produces hydrogen and carbon. The foods of the animal kingdom give nitrogen; an unknown process generates sulphur and phosphorus, and hence those emissions of sulphuretted hydrogen of which the effects are known by every one, but of which the author is never known.

The digestion of liquids is much less complicated than that of solid foods, and may be explained in a very few words.

The alimentary part which is found in suspension is joined to the chyme, and undergoes all its vicissitudes.

Liquid substances are absorbed by the vessels of the stomach, and thrown into circulation. Thence they are carried by the emulgent arteries towards the kidneys, which filter and elaborate them by means of the ureters,¹ which take them into the bladder in the form of urine.

¹ The ureters are two canals as thick as a goose quill that issue from

ON DIGESTION

Arrived at the last stage, and though also kept back by a sphincter, urine does not stop there long; its existing action makes a want to be felt, and a voluntary constriction ejects it by well-known canals of irrigation which are never named.

Digestion is of a longer or shorter duration, according to the particular disposition of the individual. Nevertheless the average time may be given at about seven hours, namely, a little more than three hours in the stomach, and the other time for the journey as far as the rectum.

After they have read this chapter, which I have culled from the best authors, and of which I have omitted all dry anatomical and abstract scientific terms, my readers will pretty well be able to judge of the place where the last repast they have taken should be — namely: during the three first hours in the stomach; later on in the intestinal canal, and after seven or eight hours in the rectum, waiting to be ejected.

INFLUENCE OF DIGESTION

81. Digestion is of all the bodily functions the one which affects most the moral state of the individual.

This assertion should not astonish any one, as it is impossible it could be otherwise.

The most elementary principles of psychology tell us that the mind is only impressed by means of the organs which are subjected to it, and put it in communication with external objects; hence it follows that when these organs are in bad condition, out of order or irritated, this change must exercise an influence on the sensations, which are the

each of the kidneys, and end in the posterior part of the neck of the bladder.

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intermediary and occasional means of intellectual operations.

Thus, the habitual manner in which digestion is performed, and especially in its later stages, makes us habitually sad, gay, taciturn, talkative, morose or melancholy, without our even suspecting it, and above all without our being able to prevent it.

Thus, all civilised human beings, with regard to this, are divided into three great categories, the regulars, the confined, and the loose ones.

Experience has proved that every one of those beings, in those different series, not only has the same innate characteristics and propensities as the others, but also that there is something analogous and similar in the way in which they fulfil the missions Fate has allotted to them in their career of life.

In order to be better understood I shall take an example from the vast field of literature. I believe that men of letters are most generally indebted to their stomach for the kind of literature they have adopted.

Considered from this point of view, comic poets ought to be amongst the regulars, tragic poets amongst the confined, and elegiac and pastoral poets amongst the loose: hence the most lachrymose poet is only separated from the most comic writer by some degree of digestive coction.

At the time when Prince Eugène of Savoy¹ did so much harm to France, some one of the court of Louis XIV, applied this principle to courage, and exclaimed, "Oh, if I could only loosen the Prince's bowels for eight days, he would soon be the greatest coward in Europe."

¹ François Eugène, Prince de Savoie-Carignan (1663-1736). His principal victories over the French were between 1701 and 1714. — TR.

ON DIGESTION

“Make haste,” said an English general, “and send our soldiers quickly to the fight, while they still have a piece of beef in their stomachs.”

Digestion in young people is often accompanied by a slight shiver, and in the old by a rather strong desire to sleep.

In the former case it is Nature that withdraws the caloric from the surfaces to employ it in her laboratory; and in the second, it is the same power, which, already enfeebled by age, cannot suffice, both for the work of digestion and for the exaltation of the senses.

During the beginning of digestion it is dangerous to abandon ourselves to mental efforts, and more dangerous still to give ourselves up to genetic enjoyments. Our graveyards are filled every year with hundreds of men who, after having dined, and often after having dined too well, neither closed their eyes nor stopped their ears.

This is a bit of advice, even for young men, who are very careless; a warning for grown-up men who forget that time never stops, and a question of life or death for those men who are on the wrong side of fifty.

Some persons always show temper while digestion is going on; and nobody should at that time propose plans to them or ask them any favour.

To such men belonged, especially, Marshal Augereau;¹ during the first hour after dinner, he would have killed friends and enemies indiscriminately.

One day I heard him say that there were in the army two persons whom the commander-in-chief could at any

¹ Pierre-François-Charles Augereau (1757–1816), Marshal of France and Duke of Castiglione, was one of the ablest of Napoleon's generals, but played a double part in 1814, and died despised by all parties. — TR.

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time order to be shot, namely, the chief paymaster and the chief of the staff. Both were present. General Chérin, the chief of the staff, made some reply in a cajoling tone, but cleverly; the paymaster, though he said nothing, probably did not think the less.

I was at that time on the marshal's staff, and a knife and fork were always laid for me at his table; but I rarely went, being afraid of those periodical squalls; I dreaded lest for one single word he should send me to finish my digestion under arrest.

I often met him afterwards in Paris, and as he expressed his regret at not having seen me more frequently, I did not conceal the cause. We both laughed over it, but he almost admitted that I was not altogether wrong.

We were then on service at Offenburg,¹ and complaints were received by the staff that we neither had game nor fish at dinner. This complaint was not unreasonable, for it is a maxim of public law that the conquerors should live well at the expense of the conquered. Thus, that very day I wrote a polite note to the head forester, pointing out the complaint, and prescribing the remedy.

The head forester was an old trooper, tall, thin, and dark, who could not endure us, and who no doubt treated us badly for fear we should take root in his territory.

His reply, therefore, was almost a refusal and full of evasions; the gamekeepers, from fear of our soldiers, had fled; the fishermen were in open rebellion; the rivers were swollen, and so on. To such excellent reasons I did not reply, but sent him ten grenadiers to be billeted upon him until further orders.

¹ Offenburg, a town in the Grand Duchy of Baden, taken by the French in 1797. — TR.

ON DIGESTION

The remedy was effective; very early next morning there arrived a heavily laden cart. The gamekeepers had no doubt come back, and the fishermen had given in, for they brought us game and fish enough to regale us for more than a week; venison, woodcocks, carp, and pike — everything in abundance!

On receiving this expiatory offering, I freed the unlucky head-forester of his guests. He came to see us, and I soon made him understand common sense; so that, during the rest of our stay in Baden, we could only congratulate ourselves on his excellent way of treating us.¹

¹ What would our author have said if he had lived until the late Franco-German War, when such treatment, as he describes, but this time practised by the Germans on the French, was bitterly complained of by the latter? — TR.

MEDITATION XVII

ON REPOSE

82. MAN is not organised to enjoy activity for an indefinite time; Nature has only destined him to an interrupted existence, and after a certain time his perceptions cease. This time of activity may be prolonged by varying the sort as well as the nature of the sensations he experiences; but this continuity of existence induces him to seek repose. Repose leads to sleep, and sleep produces dreams.

Here we find ourselves at the final limits of humanity; for a man who sleeps is already no longer a member of society, — the law still protects, but does not command him.

A singular instance of this was told me by Dom Duhaget, formerly prior of the Carthusian convent of Pierre-Châtel.¹

Dom Duhaget was a member of a good Gascon family, and had served with distinction, for twenty years, as a captain in an infantry regiment; he was also a knight of the order of Saint Louis. I have never known any one of more gentle and devout piety, and who could converse more agreeably.

“At . . . where I was prior before coming to Pierre-Châtel,” he told me, “there was a monk of a very melancholy disposition, and of a gloomy character, who was known to walk in his sleep.

¹ Pierre-Châtel is the name of a Carthusian convent in the diocese of Belley, where our author was born. This convent still exists, and its prior is even now *ex officio* governor of a fort built there, but chooses an officer as his deputy. — Tr.

ON REPOSE

“Sometimes, when he had one of his attacks, he left his cell, and came back alone; at other times he lost his way, and people were obliged to bring him back again. Several attempts had been made to cure him, but in vain; and, finally, the attacks having become less frequent, no one troubled himself more about them.

“One evening, not having gone to bed at my usual hour, I was at my writing-desk, examining some papers, when I heard open the door of my room, of which I always left the key inside, and soon I saw enter this monk in a complete state of somnambulism.

“His eyes were wide open and staring; his only garment was the tunic in which he had gone to bed; and he held a big knife in his hand.

“He went straight to my bed, for he knew where it was, and, feeling with his hand, seemed to satisfy himself that I was really in it. Then he struck three heavy blows with so much force that the blade penetrated the blankets, and went a good way into the mattress, or, to speak more correctly, into the matting which served for that purpose.

“On passing me, his countenance was disturbed, and his brows were knit; but after he had struck the blows, he turned back, and I observed that he looked calmer and seemed satisfied.

“The light of two lamps on my desk made no impression on his eyes, and he returned as he came, opening and closing carefully the two doors that led to my cell, and I soon convinced myself that he had gone straight and quietly to his own.

“You can imagine,” continued the prior, “the state I was in whilst this terrible apparition lasted. I trembled and

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was horrified at the danger I had escaped, for which I thanked Providence; but my emotion was such that I could not by any possibility close my eyes for the remainder of the night.

"Next day I sent for the monk, and asked him curtly what he had been dreaming about the night before.

"He seemed greatly moved when I asked him this. 'Reverend father,' he replied, 'I have had so strange a dream that I really feel some difficulty in telling you all about it; perhaps it may be the work of the devil, and . . .' 'I order you to tell it,' I replied; 'a dream is always involuntary, and is only an illusion. Speak without reserve.' 'Reverend father, I had scarcely lain down, when I dreamt that you had killed my mother, that her ghost appeared to me, covered with blood, to demand vengeance, and that at this sight I was transported with such fury that I ran like a madman to your room, and, finding you in bed, stabbed you. A little time after, I awoke, bathed in perspiration, detesting my crime, and immediately thanked God that I had not committed the great crime which was in my thoughts.' . . . 'You almost committed it, though you do not think so,' said I earnestly but calmly.

"I then told him what had taken place, and showed him the marks of the blows he had aimed at me.

"At this sight he threw himself at my feet, bathed in tears, deploring the involuntary misfortune which had so nearly taken place, and entreating me to inflict on him any penance that I thought fit.

"'No, no,' I said, 'I will not punish you for an involuntary action; but I exempt you henceforth from attending evening service, and warn you that your cell will be locked in future from the outside after the evening meal, and will

ON REPOSE

only be opened in time to enable you to come to the common mass at the break of day.'”

If in this instance, from which a miracle only saved him, the prior had been killed, the somnambulist monk would not have been punished, as his was an involuntary murder.

TIME FOR SLEEP

83. The general laws imposed on the globe which we inhabit have an influence on the human race. The alternation of day and night is felt with certain varieties over the whole earth, but nevertheless in such a manner that after all the one compensates for the other, and it naturally indicates the time for activity as well as that for repose; probably the wear and tear of our life would not be the same if we lived without a change of day or night.

However, when man has enjoyed his existence fully for a certain length of time, there comes a moment when he can enjoy nothing more; his impressions diminish gradually, the best made attempts on his senses are ineffectual, the organs refuse to perform those functions formally so ardently desired, the mind is saturated with sensations; the time for rest has arrived.

It is easy to see that we have considered man as a member of society, environed with all the resources and the comfort of the higher civilisation; for this desire for repose is felt much sooner and much more regularly by those who have fatigued themselves by assiduous work in their study, in the workshop, in travelling, in war, at the chase, or in any other manner.

To repose, as to every other art for the preservation of life, Nature, that excellent mother, has added a feeling of pleasure.

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The man who takes rest experiences a happiness which is as general as it is undefinable; he feels his arms lie down by their own weight, his muscles relax, his brain refreshed; his senses are calm, and his sensations less keen; he wishes for nothing, he no longer thinks; a thin veil is drawn over his eyes. A few moments more and he sleeps.

MEDITATION XVIII

OF SLEEP

84. ALTHOUGH there are some men so organised that it may be almost said that they do not sleep, nevertheless, it is generally admitted that the want of sleep is as imperious as hunger and thirst. The outposts of an army often fall asleep, even though they throw snuff into their eyes; and Pichegru,¹ when tracked by the police of Buonaparte, gave thirty thousand francs for one night's sleep, during which he was betrayed and given up.

DEFINITION

85. Sleep is that state of torpor in which man, separated from external objects by the forced inactivity of his senses, only leads a mechanical life.

Sleep, like night, is preceded and followed by two twilights, of which the first leads to absolute inertness, and the second brings us back to active life.

Let us endeavour to elucidate these phenomena.

At the moment when sleep commences, the organs of the senses sink little by little into inaction: taste first disappears, and afterwards sight and smell; hearing is still on the alert, and touch always; for it has to warn us by pain of the dangers that the body may run.

¹ Charles Pichegru (1761-1804), a celebrated French general, was implicated in royalist plots, condemned and sent to Cayenne, whence he escaped in 1798, and went to England and to Germany. He came secretly to Paris to arrange a new plot, when he was betrayed by one of his friends and put in prison, where one morning he was found strangled in his room. — TR.

OF SLEEP

Sleep is always preceded by a more or less voluptuous sensation; the body sinks with pleasure into it, being certain of a prompt restoration, and the mind gives itself up to it in confidence, in the hope that its means of activity will be revived.

It is because this sensation, which, nevertheless, is so well defined, has not been rightly appreciated, that some men of science of the highest order compare sleep with death, which all living beings resist with all their might, and which has such special symptoms that they horrify even animals.

Like all other pleasures, sleep may become a passion, for some persons have been sleeping away three-fourths of their life; and as in all other passions, its effects, indolence, weakness, stupidity, and death, are then detrimental.

The school of Salerno only allowed seven hours sleep, without distinction of age or sex.¹ This rule is too severe; we must grant something more to children, who require it, and to women from courtesy; but whenever any one spends more than ten hours in bed, it is certain, that he errs in excess.

In the first moments of dawning sleep, the will still lasts; one can waken up, but the eye has not lost all its power. *Non omnibus dormio*, said Mæcenas;² and in this state more

¹ Salerno, a town on the west coast of Italy, about thirty-four miles from Naples by rail, had, until the fifteenth century, the most famous medical school in Europe. George III used to say when speaking of sleep, "Six hours are enough for a man, seven for a woman or child, and eight for a fool." — Tr.

² Caius Cilnius Mæcenas, a Roman statesman of an equestrian family, the friend of the Emperor Augustus, and a patron of the learned men and poets of his time. It is said that one day, whilst Augustus was visiting him, he fell asleep, whereupon the emperor kissed his wife; but when one of the courtiers tried to imitate his master's example, Mæcenas awoke and exclaimed: "I do not sleep for all."

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than one husband has acquired far from pleasant certainty. Some ideas may be originated in the mind, but they are incoherent; doubtful glimpses of light spring up wherein indefinite objects are thought to be hovering around us. This condition does not last long; soon everything disappears, all sensation is over, and we fall into an absolute sleep.

What does the mind do during this time? It lives within itself, it is like a pilot during a calm, like a mirror during the night, like a lute that no person ever touches, it awaits new sensations.

But some psychologists, and amongst others Count von Redern,¹ maintain that the mind never ceases to act; and he gives as a proof the fact that any man who is forcibly aroused from his first sleep experiences a sensation as if he were disturbed in some occupation in which he had been zealously engaged.

There is really something in this observation which deserves to be verified attentively.

Moreover, this state of absolute annihilation is of brief duration, and never exceeds more than five or six hours. Little by little the losses are repaired, a vague sentiment of existence begins to spring up again, and the sleeper passes into the realm of dreams.

¹ Sigismund Ehrenreich, Count von Redern (1755-1835), a Parisian diplomatist, as well as an author and a manufacturer, was the partner of Saint-Simon, with whom he quarrelled. He became a naturalised Frenchman in 1811. The work Brillat-Savarin refers to is the *Examen Sommaire*, etc.—Tr.

MEDITATION XIX

OF DREAMS

86. DREAMS are the unilateral impressions which reach the mind without the assistance of external objects.

These phenomena, so common, and at the same time so extraordinary, are nevertheless still little known.

Our scientific men are to blame for this, for they have not yet given us a sufficient number of observations. This indispensable help will come in time, and the double nature of man will be better known. In the present state of science, it must be taken for granted that there exists a fluid, as subtle as powerful, which transmits to the brain the impressions received by the senses, and that ideas arise, stimulated by such impressions.

Absolute sleep is caused by the loss or inertness of this fluid. Digestion and assimilation do not cease during sleep, but repair such losses, so that there comes a time when man, possessing already all the means of action, is not yet excited by external objects.

Then the nervous fluid, moveable by its nature, is carried to the brain by the nerves in the same places, and manner, and by the same route as when awake; it ought therefore to produce the same effects, but nevertheless with less intensity.

The reason of this difference appears not difficult to find out. When a man who is awake is impressed by an external object, the sensation is precise, quick, and requisite; the entire organ is called into play. When, on the other hand,

OF DREAMS

this same impression is transmitted to the mind during sleep, it is only the hinder part of the nerves which is set in motion, and the sensation must necessarily be less vivid and less positive.

To make ourselves better understood, we say that in a man awake the whole organ is impressed, whilst in a man asleep only that part nearest the brain is affected.

Nevertheless, we know that in voluptuous dreams, Nature is almost as much gratified as when a person is awake, but the difference lies in the organs, for the genetic sense only needs one stimulus, and each sex has the requisite organs to accomplish the act for which it has been created.

AN INVESTIGATION TO BE HELD

87. When the nervous fluid is thus transported to the brain, it always reaches it by channels intended for the use of one of our senses, and this is the reason why certain sensations are then aroused, or certain series of ideas in preference to others. Thus we think we see, when the optic nerve is excited; we think we hear, when the auditory nerves are affected, and so on; but we may remark as a singularity, that it is very rare that the sensations experienced in dreams refer to taste or smell. When we dream of a flower-bed or a field, we see the flowers without smelling their odours, and when we think we are present at a banquet, we see the dishes, but do not taste them.

It would be a task worthy of our scientific men to investigate why two of our senses do not impress the mind during sleep, whilst the four others possess nearly their full power. I do not know any psychologist who has considered this fact.

Let us also remark that the more deeply we experience

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affections in sleep, the more intense they become. Thus ideas of the most sensual character are nothing compared to the anguish we feel if we dream of having lost a dear child, or of going to be hanged. For in such a case we awake to find ourselves covered with perspiration or bathed in tears.

NATURE OF DREAMS

88. However incongruous the ideas are that sometimes agitate us during sleep, nevertheless, when closely examined, they will be found to be only recollections, or combinations of recollections.

Thus I am tempted to say that dreams are but the memory of sensations.

Their strangeness only consists therefore in this, that the association of those ideas is unusual, because freed from the laws of chronology, propriety, and time; so that, as a final analysis, no one ever dreamt of anything that was previously entirely unknown to him.

We shall not be surprised at the peculiarity of our dreams, when we reflect that in a man awake four faculties direct and reciprocally correct each other, namely, sight, hearing, touch, and memory; whereas, in the case of any one who is asleep, each sense is abandoned to its own resources.

I am inclined to compare these two conditions of the brain to a piano, before which is seated a musician, who, passing carelessly his fingers over the keys, by mere reminiscence creates some melody, with which he could combine a complete harmony, if he used all his faculties. This comparison might be carried out much farther, by considering that reflection is to ideas what harmony is to sounds, and that certain ideas contain others, just as a principal note

OF DREAMS

in a chord contains others which are secondary to it, and so on.

SYSTEM OF DR. GALL

89. Having thus far quietly followed a system that is not without interest, I have come to the confines of the system of Dr. Gall, who teaches and maintains the multiformity of organs in the brain.

I therefore cannot go farther, or transgress the limits I have fixed; nevertheless, for the love of science to which it may be seen that I am no stranger, I will state here two facts which came to my own personal knowledge, and which can be safely relied on, as there are among my readers many persons who can testify to their truth.

FIRST FACT

About 1790, there lived in a village called Gevrin, in the *arrondissement* of Belley, a very shrewd merchant, called Landot, who had scraped together a pretty good fortune.

He was suddenly seized with a severe paralytic stroke, so that he was thought to be dead. The faculty came to his aid and preserved his life, not however without loss, for he left behind him nearly all his intellectual faculties, and especially memory.

Nevertheless, as he was still crawling along as well as he could, and had recovered his appetite, he continued to manage his own property.

Those people who formerly had done business with him, and who saw him in this state, believed that now the time had come to take their revenge, and, on the pretext of keeping him company, they came from all parts to propose to him bargains, purchases, sales, exchanges, and other

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such transactions which formerly had been his chief occupation.

But the assailants were greatly astonished, and soon found out that they had reckoned without their host.

The cunning old fellow had lost none of his commercial capacities; and the same man who sometimes did not recognise his servants, and forgot even his own name, knew everything about the price of all kinds of goods, and the value of every acre of land, vineyard, or wood, within a radius of three leagues.

In those various business relations, his judgment had remained intact; and as the people did not distrust him, the most of those who came to try the invalid merchant were themselves caught in the snare they had been endeavouring to spread for him.

SECOND FACT

At Belley there lived a certain M. Chirol, who served for a long time in the body-guard, under Louis XV, as well as under Louis XVI.

He had just sense enough for the service in which his whole life had been engaged; but he possessed in a superlative degree a knowledge of all sorts of games, so that not alone he played well all games formerly in vogue, such as ombre, piquet, whist, and so on; but when any new game was introduced he knew it well, after having played it twice.

Now this M. Chirol was also struck by paralysis, and the attack was so severe that he fell into a state of nearly absolute insensibility; but two faculties were however spared, the power of digestion and his skill at cards.

He used to go every day to a house where he was ac-

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customed to play, and sit in a corner, motionless and drowsy, without occupying himself with anything that took place around him. Just before they began to play, he was asked to take a hand, and always accepted it; he crawled to the card-table, and there one could perceive that the disease which had paralysed the greatest part of his faculties had not made him lose one atom of his skill at cards. A little time before his death, M. Chirol gave us a convincing proof of his undiminished ability as a player.

One day there came to Belley a banker from Paris, whose name, I think, was M. Delins. He brought several letters of introduction, and as he was a stranger and a Parisian, it was more than enough for every one in this small town to do his best to make him as happy as possible.

M. Delins was a *gourmand*, and fond of card-playing. The first passion he could satisfy easily enough, for he was kept at table for five or six hours every day. It was more difficult to satisfy his second passion, for he was very fond of piquet, and spoke of playing for six francs the point, which exceeded, by a great deal, the highest sum for which we had ever played.

To overcome this obstacle, a company was formed, in which every one took or did not take a share, according as he felt inclined; for some said that the Parisian knew more than we provincials did; others, on the contrary, maintained that the inhabitants of that great town are always too flighty to show great skill at cards.

However, the company was formed, and the task of defending the collective funds was entrusted to M. Chirol.

When the Parisian banker saw this tall figure, pale, ghastly, and walking sideways, sit down opposite to him,

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he thought at first that it was a joke; but when he saw the spectre take the cards, and use them like a proficient, he began to think that his opponent might formerly have been worthy of him.

It did not take long to convince him that he was still worthy of him; for not only in this game, but also in many others which followed, M. Delins was beaten, punished, and so plucked, that at his departure he had to count out more than six hundred francs, which were carefully divided among the shareholders of the company.

Before leaving, M. Delins came to thank us for the kind manner in which we had received him; nevertheless, he protested against the broken-down adversary we had opposed to him, and assured us that he never could console himself for having contended so unprofitably with a corpse.

CONCLUSION

The consequence of these two facts is easy to deduce; it appears to me evident that the paralytic stroke which in both these cases disturbed the brain, respected that part of the organ which had so long been employed in problems of commerce and of cards; and that, doubtless, that part only resisted because continual exercise had given it greater strength, or, also, because those same impressions, for so long a time repeated, left deeper traces.

INFLUENCE OF AGE

90. Age has a marked influence on the nature of dreams.

In infancy, we dream of games, gardens, flowers, verdure, and other pleasing objects; in later life, of pleasures, love, battles, marriages; later still, of households, voyages, favours of a prince or of his representatives; last of all, of

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business, embarrassments, treasures, former amusements, and friends dead a long while ago.

PHENOMENA OF DREAMS

91. Certain uncommon phenomena accompany sometimes sleep and dreams; their examination may serve to advance the progress of anthroponomy;¹ and it is for this reason that I shall record here three instances taken amongst many others which, during the course of a rather long life, I have had occasion to experience myself in the silence of the night.

First Instance

I dreamt one night that I had discovered the secret of dispensing with the laws of gravity, so that my body having no tendency to ascend or to descend, I could effect either the one or the other with an equal facility according to my will.

This state seemed delicious to me, and perhaps many persons have dreamt something like it; but the most remarkable part of my dream is that I remember that I explained to myself very clearly (at least it appeared so) the means that had led to this result. These means seemed so simple that I was surprised that they had not been discovered earlier.

On awaking, this explanatory part entirely escaped me, but the conclusion remained; and ever since that time, I am thoroughly convinced that sooner or later some enlightened genius will make this discovery, and at all events, I claim priority.

¹ One of the words coined by our author, meaning "the knowledge of man." — TR.

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Second Instance

92. Not many months ago, when asleep, I experienced a sensation of pleasure quite extraordinary.

It consisted in a sort of delicious quivering of all the particles which composed my body. It was a kind of titillation most delightful, which, beginning at the epidermis, extended from head to foot, and vibrated through me to the very marrow of my bones. I thought I saw a violet flame play about my forehead.

*Lambere flamma comas et circum tempora pasci.*¹

I think that the condition, which I felt physically, lasted at least thirty seconds, and I awoke filled with a surprise that was not unmixed with terror.

From this sensation, which is yet present to my memory, and from several observations made on people in a trance and others very excitable, I have come to the conclusion that the limits of pleasure are not yet known or defined, and that we are ignorant of the state of beatitude our body may reach. I hope that in a few centuries the physiology of the future will get hold of these extraordinary sensations, to produce them at will, and that as sleep is procured by opium, our great-grandchildren may, in that way, have compensations for the atrocious pains we have sometimes to suffer.

The theory I have just advanced may be supported in some way by analogy, for I have already remarked that the power of harmony, which procures for us an enjoyment so keen, so pure, and so eagerly sought after, was entirely unknown to the Romans, as it is a discovery which is not more than five hundred years old.

¹ This is a quotation from Virgil's *Æneid*. — TR.

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Third Instance

93. In the year VIII of the Republic (1800), I went to bed as usual, and nothing remarkable happened during the day: I woke up at about one o'clock in the morning, the usual time of the end of my first sleep, and found myself in a quite extraordinary state of cerebral excitement; my conceptions were bright, my thoughts profound; the sphere of my intelligence appeared to have become enlarged. I sat up in bed; and my eyes were affected by the sensation of a pale, vaporous, and uncertain light, which, however, did not at all enable me to distinguish objects.

The crowd of ideas which succeeded each other so rapidly made me fancy that this state lasted for several hours; but, according to the time-piece in my bedroom, I am certain that it did not last more than half an hour.

An external accident, quite independent of my will, and which thus recalled me to things terrestrial, drove away this feeling. At the very moment the luminous sensation disappeared I felt my faculties declining, the limits of my intelligence grow narrower; in a word, I became what I was before I went to bed.

But as I was thoroughly awake, my memory retained very faintly a part of the ideas that passed through my mind.

The first ideas had time as their subject. It appeared to me that the past, the present, and the future were of the same nature, and merely made one point, in such a manner that it was as easy to predict the future as to remember the past.

This is all that I remember of this first intuition, which was partly effaced by those that followed.

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My attention was afterwards directed to the senses; I classified them in their order of perfection, and having come to think that there were as many within us as there were external ones, I occupied myself in looking for them.

I had already discovered three, and almost four, when I fell back again on the earth. These three are as follows: —

1. *Compassion*, which is a sensation we feel about the heart when we see a fellow creature suffer.

2. *Predilection*, which is a feeling of preference not merely for one object, but for all that is connected with it or recalls it to our memory.

3. *Sympathy*, which is also a feeling of preference that attracts two objects, the one towards the other.

At first we might imagine that these two sentiments were merely one and the same thing; but what prevents them from being confounded is that *predilection* is not always reciprocal, and that *sympathy* is so, as a matter of course.

Finally, occupying myself with *compassion*, I was led to an induction I think very correct, and which I would not have perceived at any other moment, namely, that *compassion* is the origin of that beautiful theorem, the first base of all legislation:

Do not unto others that which you would not wish others to do to you: —

Alteri ne facias, quod tibi fieri non vis.

Moreover, my idea of the state in which I was then, and what I felt on that occasion, is such, that I would willingly give, if it were possible, all the time which remains to me to live, for a month of such an existence.

Men of letters will comprehend this much better than others, for there are few of them to whom a similar experience has not occurred, though in an inferior degree.

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In bed we lie comfortably in a horizontal position, the head well covered up. We think of the work we have on hand, the imagination gets excited, ideas abound, expressions follow each other; and as we must get up to write, we dress ourself, take off our nightcap, and sit down at the writing-table. But we feel in a moment that we are no longer the same. The imagination has become chilled, the thread of ideas is broken, expressions are lacking; we are obliged to hunt up with difficulty what before we found so easily, and very often we are forced to put off our work till a more promising day.

All this is easily explained by the effect which is produced on the brain by the changes of position and temperature. We here find again another proof of its influence on the body and on our mind.

Following out this observation, I have perhaps been led too far, but, after all, I am inclined to believe that the excitability of the Orientals is due partly to the fact that, being of the religion of Mohammed, they always have the head warmly covered, and that it is to obtain a contrary effect that all legislators for monastic orders have imposed on the monks the obligation of keeping that part of the body uncovered and shaven.

MEDITATION XX

ON THE INFLUENCE OF DIET ON REPOSE, SLEEP, AND DREAMS

94. WHEN man rests, whether he sleeps or dreams, he never ceases to be under the power of the laws of nutrition, and does not quit the domain of gastronomy.

Theory and experience combine to prove that the quality and quantity of food have a powerful influence on work, repose, sleep, and dreams.

EFFECTS OF DIET ON WORK

95. A man who is badly fed cannot bear the fatigues of a prolonged labour for a long time; his body becomes covered with perspiration, his strength soon abandons him, and for him sleep is merely the utter impossibility of action.

If his labours be mental, his ideas are crude and without precision. His reflection refuses to combine them, or his judgment to analyse them. The brain exhausts itself in such vain efforts, and the soldier falls asleep on the field of battle.

I have always thought that the suppers of Auteuil, and of the hôtels of Rambouillet and Soissons,¹ did a great deal

¹ Boileau (1663-1711) and Molière (1622-73) had their country houses at Auteuil, where they often received their friends to supper. The Hôtel de Rambouillet, where Catherine de Vivonne-Pisani (1558-1665), the wife of the Marquis de Rambouillet, dwelt, was, from 1645 until 1665, the place where all celebrated men of letters and all noblemen of intelligence met; it was, however, more renowned for its "feast of reason and its flow of soul" than for its suppers. In the Hôtel de Soissons lived Olympia



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of good to the authors of the time of Louis XIV; and the witty critic Geoffroy was not altogether so very wrong when he made fun of the *eau sucrée* of the poets of the end of the eighteenth century, a beverage which he thought they habitually drank, though this was far from true.

According to those principles, I have examined the works of some authors known to have been poor and wretched, and I only found them possessed of real energy when they were stimulated by an habitual sentiment of their sorrows, or by envy, often very badly concealed.

On the contrary, a man who eats well, and who repairs his forces with prudence and discernment, may perform an amount of work that no living being can do.

On the eve of his departure for Boulogne, the Emperor Napoleon I was at work for more than thirty hours, with his Council of State and the various depositories of his power, without any other refreshment than two very short meals and a few cups of coffee.

Dr. Thomas Brown¹ tells us of an English clerk of the Admiralty who, having accidentally lost some papers which could only be prepared by himself, was employed fifty-two consecutive hours in writing them a second time. Without a suitable diet, he never could have borne such an enormous waste of energy. He kept himself up in the following manner: first, by drinking water, then by taking light food, then wine, then strong soup, and finally opium.

Mancini (1640–1708), a niece of Cardinal Mazarin, and the wife of the Count de Soissons, who was banished from France, and died an exile. — TR.

¹ Dr. Thomas Brown (1778–1820), the successor of Dugald Stewart in the Edinburgh Chair of Moral Philosophy, is above all known by his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. — TR.

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I met one day a courier whom I had known in the army, and who came from Spain, where he had been sent with despatches from the Government, — such a courier is called in Spanish, *correo ganando horas*; — and who had made the journey in twelve days, having only halted at Madrid for four hours. Some glasses of wine and a few basons of soup were all that he had taken during this prolonged series of joltings and sleepless nights; and he added, that any food more solid would have infallibly prevented him from continuing his journey.

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96. Food has more than a slight influence on sleep and dreams.

He who wants to eat cannot sleep. The pangs of hunger keep him in a state of irksome excitement, and if feebleness and exhaustion compel him to drop asleep, his slumber is light, weary, and broken.

He, on the contrary, who in his eating exceeds the bounds of discretion sinks to sleep at once. If he dreams, he remembers nothing of it, because the nervous fluid has been passing in every direction through the nerves. For the same reason, he awakes suddenly, comes back with difficulty to social life, and when sleep is entirely gone, still feels for a long while the fatigue of digestion.

We may lay down as a general maxim, that coffee drives away sleep. Custom weakens that inconvenience, and even makes it entirely disappear; but it is invariably experienced by all Europeans when they commence to take it.

Some kinds of food, on the other hand, gently provoke sleep; such as those in which milk forms the chief part, the entire family of lettuce-plants, poultry, purslain, orange-

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flower, and especially the rennet-apple, when eaten immediately before retiring to rest.

CONSEQUENCE

97. Experience, founded on millions of observations, has taught us that food determines dreams.

Generally, all the foods that are slightly exciting, cause people to dream; such as brown meat, pigeons, ducks, game, and above all, hare.

This property is also recognised in asparagus, celery, truffles, scented sweetmeats, and especially in vanilla.

It would be a great error to believe that we should banish from our tables such somniferous substances, for the dreams that result from eating them are in general of a light and agreeable nature, and prolong our existence, even during the time when it appears to be suspended.

There are persons for whom sleep is a separate life, a sort of prolonged romance; that is to say, that all their dreams follow each other, that they end the second night a dream begun the night before, and that when asleep, they see certain faces which they recognise, and have seen already, but which, nevertheless, they have never met with in the real world.

RESULT

98. A person who reflects on his physical life, and who conducts it according to the principles we have indicated, will prepare with sagacity his repose, his sleep, and his dreams.

He distributes his work in such a way as never to wear himself out; he lightens it by varying it with discernment, and refreshes his intelligence by short intervals of repose,

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which relieve him without interrupting the continuity which is sometimes compulsory.

If during the daytime he needs a longer rest, he indulges in it only in a sitting attitude, refraining from sleep, unless irresistibly forced to give way to it, and is especially careful not to do so habitually.

When night brings the hour for his daily repose, he retires to an airy room, does not surround himself with curtains that compel him to breathe the same air over and over again, and takes good care not to close the shutters, so that whenever his eyes half open he will be cheered by a remnant of light.

He lies down in a bed slightly raised towards the head, his pillow is stuffed with horse-hair, his night-cap made of linen, and his chest unencumbered by a weight of blankets; but he is careful to keep his feet warmly covered.

He eats with discrimination, and never refuses good and excellent food; he drinks the best wines, and with precaution even the most heady. During dessert, he talks more about the ladies than about politics, and composes more madrigals than epigrams. He takes a cup of coffee if it suits his constitution, and after a few moments a thimbleful of excellent liqueur, merely to sweeten his mouth. In everything he shows himself an amiable guest, a distinguished connoisseur, and nevertheless exceeds but in a trifling degree the limits of his natural wants.

Then he goes to bed satisfied with himself and others, his eyes close, he passes through the twilight of consciousness, and falls, for several hours, into absolute slumber.

Soon Nature has levied her tribute, and assimilation has replaced all losses. Then pleasant dreams descend and give him a mysterious existence; he sees the persons whom

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he loves, occupies himself again with his favourite occupations, and transports himself to the places he is fond of.

Finally, he feels sleep gradually pass away, and enters again upon social life without having to regret any time lost, because, even in his sleep, he has enjoyed activity without fatigue, and pleasure without alloy.

MEDITATION XXI

ON CORPULENCE

99. IF I had been a physician with a degree, I should, in the first place, have written a monograph on corpulence; I would then have founded an empire in that corner of the field of science, and I should have had the double advantage of having as patients people who are as well as can be, and of being every day besieged by the fairest portion of the human race. For to be exactly stout enough, neither too much nor too little, is for women the study of their life.

That which I have left undone, another doctor will accomplish; and if he is learned, discreet, and handsome, I prophesy he will have a wonderful success.

*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus hæres.*¹

Meanwhile I intend to prepare the way for him, for an article on corpulence is indispensable in a work that has for its object man as a feeding animal.

I understand by corpulence that state of fatty congestion in which, without the individual being ill, the lines gradually increase in size, and lose their form and their original symmetry.

There is a sort of corpulence of the stomach only which I have never observed in females, for, as their fibre is generally softer, their whole body becomes stout, when corpulence attacks them. I call this sort of stomach-corpulence.

¹ "There may arise some heir out of our bones." An alteration of a line in Virgil's *Æneid*, iv, 625, which has "avenger" instead of "heir."
— Tr.

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lence *gastrophoria*, and *gastrophori* ¹ those people who are attacked by it. I am myself among their number, but although bearer of a stomach sufficiently prominent, the lower part of my legs is spare, and I am as sinewy as an Arab horse.

I have, nevertheless, regarded my stomach as a formidable antagonist. I vanquished it, and only made it look majestic; but to do so it was necessary to fight against it, and it is to this contest of thirty years that this essay owes any merit there may be in it.

I shall commence by giving a sample of more than five hundred conversations I formerly kept up at table with persons menaced with corpulence or suffering from it.

Corpulent man.— Good Heavens! what delicious bread! where do you get it?

I.— At M. Limet's in the Rue de Richelieu;² he supplies the Duke of Orléans, and the Prince de Condé; I send there because it is quite near me, and I continue to deal with him as he makes the best bread in the world.

Corpulent man.— I will take a note of his address; I eat a good deal of bread, and with such rolls as those I could abstain from everything else.

Another corpulent man.— What are you doing! You eat only the liquid portion of your soup, and you leave that beautiful Carolina rice in your plate!

I.— I nourish myself in a very special way.

Corpulent man.— It is a bad one, then! I am fond of rice, and also of flour, pastry, and things of that sort. Nothing is more nourishing, cheaper, and takes less trouble.

¹ Another word invented by our author, equivalent to "paunch-bellied," or "bearer of a corporation." — TR.

² M. Limet's name and address are no longer found in the Paris Directory (Bottin) for this year (1884). — TR.

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An enormously corpulent man.— Do me the favour, sir, of passing the potatoes in front of you; at the rate they go off, I am afraid I shall not be in time.

I.— There they are, sir.

Corpulent man.— But won't you take any? There is enough for two, and those who come after us must do as they can.¹

I.— I don't take any. I look on potatoes as a great preservative against famine; but, except that, they seem to me thoroughly insipid.

Corpulent man.— A gastronomic heresy! There is nothing finer than potatoes. I eat them prepared in every way; and if they appear in the second course, either *à la lyonnaise* or in a *soufflé*, I hereby enter a protest for the preservation of my rights.

A corpulent lady.— Will you be so kind as to order some of those *Soissons haricots* to be brought to me which I see at the bottom of the table?

I.— After having given the order, I sang in a low voice to a well-known tune: —

“At *Soissons* they're a happy lot,
They've *haricots* in plenty got.”

Corpulent man.— Do not joke; they are a real treasure for that country; and Paris pays a considerable amount to be supplied with them. I must also ask you not to make fun of those little common beans, they call *English beans*; when still green they are food for the Gods.

I.— Hang those *haricot beans*! Woe betide those common beans!

Corpulent man (defiantly). — I laugh at your imprecations.

¹ The original has *après nous le déluge* (after us the deluge), a saying attributed to Louis XV when he was warned that France was getting from better to worse. — Tr.

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tions! You talk as if you were a whole council all by yourself.

I (to corpulent lady).— I must congratulate you on your good health; it appears, madam, that you have grown a little stouter since I last had the honour of seeing you.

Corpulent lady.— I owe this, most likely, to my new way of living.

I.— What is that?

Corpulent lady.— For some time I have breakfasted on a basin of first-rate rich soup, big enough for two. And what soup, too! The spoon can stand upright in it.

I (to another corpulent lady).— Madam, if your glances do not deceive me, you will accept a small piece of this *charlotte*, and I will make an attack upon it in your behalf?

Corpulent lady.— Well, sir, you have made a mistake; I see here dishes which I like above all things, and they are both of the masculine gender; I mean that rice-cake with its golden sides, and this gigantic Savoy cake,¹ for allow me to hint to you that I dote upon sweet pastry.

I (to another corpulent lady).— While they discuss politics at the other end of the table, madam, will you permit me to examine for you this *frangipani* tart?

Corpulent lady.— With pleasure; there is nothing I like better than pastry. We have a pastry-cook in our house as a tenant, and my daughter and I, between us, eat up the whole of the rent, I think, and perhaps more.

I (after having looked at the young lady).— It seems to have done you both a great deal of good; your daughter is a fine-looking girl, and very attractive.

¹ *Gâteau de riz* and *biscuit de Savoie* are of the masculine gender in French. — TR.

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Corpulent Lady.— Well! do you know that her friends sometimes tell her that she is too fat.

I.— That is probably mere envy.

Corpulent lady.— Very likely; moreover, she'll soon be married, and the first child will make it all straight.

It is by such conversations as these that a light was thrown on a theory which, in its elementary form, I had observed in other species besides the human one, — to wit, that fatty corpulence is always principally due to food too much charged with starchy, farinaceous matter; and thus, I became convinced that the same regimen is always followed by the same effect. As a matter of fact carnivorous animals never become fat; for example, wolves, jaguars, birds of prey, ravens, etc.

Herbivorous animals do not fatten much, at least until age has brought them to take rest: on the other hand, they fatten quickly as soon as they are fed on potatoes, grain, and any kind of flour.

Corpulence is never found either amongst the savages or among those classes of society who work to eat, and only eat to live.

CAUSES OF CORPULENCE

100. From the preceding observations, of which any one can verify the accuracy for himself, it is easy to assign the principal causes of corpulence.

The first is the natural disposition of the individual. Nearly all men are born with certain predispositions, which their physiognomy indicates. Of every hundred persons who die of pulmonary diseases, ninety have brown hair, a long face, and a sharp nose. Out of a hundred corpulent people ninety have a short face, round eyes, and a flat nose.

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There exist, therefore, persons in some degree predestined to corpulence, and whose digestive powers elaborate a greater proportion of fat, all other things being equal.

This physical truth, of which I am profoundly convinced, influences in a deplorable manner the observations I make on certain occasions.

When we meet in society with a young lady, not too tall, lively, with a rosy complexion, a roguish nose, a rounded form, plump hands and short plump feet, everybody is delighted with her, and finds her charming. But I, taught by experience, think of what she will be ten years hence; I see the ravages that corpulence will have made on those youthful charms, and I groan over evils not yet existing.

Such anticipated compassion is a painful sentiment, and furnishes a proof, among a thousand others, that man would be more unhappy if he could foresee the future.

The second and principal cause of corpulence, is because farinaceous and starchy substances form the basis of man's daily food. We have already remarked, that all animals who live on farinaceous food become fat, and man follows the common law.

Starchy food produces more quickly and surely its effect when combined with sugar. Sugar and fat contain hydrogen, which is common to them; thus both are combustible. These two substances mixed are also more active in proportion as they please the taste, and because sweet dishes are scarcely ever eaten until after the natural appetite is already satisfied, and when there remains nothing more than this other and luxurious appetite, which must be tempted by the most refined art, and the most alluring variety.

Starchy food is not less fattening when it is conveyed

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in liquids, such as beer, and other drinks of the kind. People who drink them habitually are also those where the most wonderful paunches can be seen. Some Parisian families who in 1817 drank beer for economy's sake, because wine was then very dear, have been recompensed for it by a corpulence they would be glad to get rid of.

Continuation

101. Another cause of corpulence is the result of taking too much sleep, as well as the lack of exercise.

The human body is much repaired during sleep, and in that time it loses little, as the muscular action is suspended. Hence the necessity for exercise to evaporate the plethora; but by the very fact of sleeping a great deal, the amount of the time for action is so much the more limited.

Another consequence is that great sleepers refuse to do anything that would give them the slightest fatigue; the excess of assimilation is thus conveyed by the current of circulation; and by a process of which Nature has kept the secret, a small percentage of hydrogen is added and fat is formed, which is deposited by that same current in the cells of the cellular tissue.

Continuation

102. Finally, another cause of corpulence is an excess in eating and drinking.

There is some truth in the saying that one of the privileges of the human species is to eat without being hungry, and to drink without being thirsty; and, as a matter of fact, animals could not do this, for it springs from reflection on the pleasures of the table, and from the desire to prolong their duration.

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This twofold inclination exists wherever men are found; and we know that savages eat to excess and drink till they are stupefied every time they have an opportunity.

As for ourselves, whether citizens of the Old or the New World, we think we are at the height of civilisation, and yet we certainly eat too much.

I do not allude to that small number of men who, from avarice or incapacity, live alone and by themselves: the former are delighted to know that they are heaping up wealth; the latter groaning because they cannot do better.

But I affirm for all those who, living around us, are by turns hosts or guests, who politely ask people to dinner or accept invitations courteously, who, having no longer any wants, eat of a dish because it is attractive, or drink some wine because it is of foreign growth — I say it of those people, whether they frequent every day a drawing-room, or whether they only have a treat on Sundays and sometimes on Mondays, the great majority of all these eat and drink too much, and enormous quantities of eatables are every day absorbed without need.

This nearly always present cause acts differently, according to the constitution of different persons; and for those people who have a weak stomach, its effect is not corpulence, but indigestion.

Anecdote

103. We have had before us an example, known to the half of Paris.

M. Lang kept one of the best houses of this town; his table, above all, was excellent, but his stomach was as weak as his love for good living was strong. He did the honours

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as a host to perfection, and, above all, ate with a courage worthy of a better fate.

All went well enough till the coffee was brought in; but then the stomach speedily refused the work imposed on it; pains commenced, and the unhappy gastronome was obliged to throw himself on a sofa, where he lay until the morning, expiating by protracted agony the short pleasure he had enjoyed.

It is very curious that he never corrected this fault. As long as he lived, he had to submit to this strange alternative, and the sufferings of the day before did never influence his conduct during meal-time the next day.

Among men of an active digestion, the excess of nutrition acts as indicated in the preceding article. All the food is digested, and that which is not necessary for the reparation of the body is appropriated, and turns into fat.

Other men suffer from perpetual indigestion; food passes along without doing any good, and those who do not know the cause are surprised that so many good things have not produced a better result.

The reader will perceive that I do not go minutely into details, for there is a number of secondary causes arising from our habits, from our condition in life, from our hobbies and our pleasures, that second and promote those which I have just pointed out.

I leave those minute details to the successor whom I have mentioned at the commencement of this Meditation, and shall be content with a handsel, which is the right of the first-comer in every case.

For a long time intemperance has attracted the attention of observers. Philosophers have extolled temperance, princes have made sumptuary laws, religion has preached

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at *gourmandise*. Alas! nobody eats a mouthful the less for all that, and the art of eating too much becomes every day more flourishing.

I shall be perhaps more happy in striking out a new path. I shall show the physical inconveniences of corpulence; self-preservation will perhaps have a greater influence than morality, be more persuasive than sermons, and more powerful than laws. I think that the fair sex will at any rate be disposed to open their eyes to the light.

INCONVENIENCE OF CORPULENCE

104. Corpulence has a lamentable influence on the two sexes, inasmuch as it most injuriously affects strength and beauty. It lessens strength because it increases the weight to be moved, whilst it does not increase the motive power; and again, by impeding the respiration, which renders impossible all work requiring a prolonged use of muscular power.

Corpulence injures beauty by destroying the harmony of proportion established at first, because all the parts of the body do not enlarge equally. It also harms it by filling up cavities that Nature had destined to be in the shade; and so nothing is more common than to meet with faces formerly very interesting, and which fat has made almost insignificant.

The chief of the last government, Napoleon I, did not escape this law. He had grown very corpulent in his last campaign; from pale he had become quite wan, and his eyes had lost part of their brilliancy.

Corpulence brings with it a distaste for dancing, walking, riding, and an unfitness for all the occupations or amusements that require a little agility or skill.

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It also predisposes to various maladies, such as apoplexy, dropsy, ulcers on the legs, and renders all other illnesses much more difficult to cure.

EXAMPLES OF CORPULENCE

105. I do not recollect the names of any other corpulent heroes except those of Marius¹ and John Sobieski.²

Marius, who was of small stature, had become almost as broad as he was high, and it was perhaps his enormous size that frightened the Cimbrian soldier who was ordered to kill him. As for the King of Poland, his corpulence very nearly was fatal to him, for, having fallen amidst a troop of Turkish cavalry, before whom he had to flee, he soon became short of breath, and would have been undoubtedly slaughtered if some of his aides-de-camp had not held him up, almost fainting, on his horse, whilst others generously sacrificed themselves to delay the enemy.

If I do not mistake, the Duke of Vendôme,³ that worthy son of the great Henri IV,⁴ was also remarkably corpulent. He died in an inn, abandoned by every one, and preserved consciousness long enough to see the last of his followers snatch away the pillow from under his head when about to yield his last breath.

Many other examples of monstrous corpulence will be found in various books; I shall not quote them here, and

¹ Caius Marius (B.C. 150–B.C. 86), seven times Consul of Rome, and the great rival of Sulla, was the leader of the democratic party. — TR.

² John Sobieski (1624–96), King of Poland, defeated the Turks before Vienna, 12th September, 1683. — TR.

³ Louis-Joseph, Duc de Vendôme (1654–1712), grandson of a natural son of Henry IV, a man of dissolute character, but a great general, as proved by his winning the battle of Villa-Viciosa, 9th December, 1710. — TR.

⁴ Henri IV (1553–1613), a great and good king of France, signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598, and was murdered by Ravaillac. — TR.

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confine myself to give a few instances of those I have personally observed. M. Rameau, one of my school-fellows, afterwards mayor of La Chaleur in Burgundy, was only five feet six inches high, and yet he weighed five hundred pounds; so that each section of his body was a foot thick and about a hundredweight.

The Duc de Luynes,¹ with whom I have often sat in the same assembly, became enormous. Fat had disfigured his handsome countenance, and he passed the last years of his life in a nearly continual sleep.

But the most extraordinary instance I have met was an inhabitant of New York, whom many Frenchmen, now in Paris, may remember having seen in Broadway, sitting in an enormous armchair, of which the legs were strong enough to support a church. Edward was at least six feet four in height, and as his fat had puffed him out in every direction, he was almost nine feet round the waist. His fingers were like those of the Roman emperor² who used his wife's bracelets as rings; his arms and his thighs were tubular, and as thick as the waist of a man of ordinary stature, and he had feet like an elephant, covered with the thick fat of his legs. The weight of fat kept down his lower eyelids and made them gape; but what was hideous to behold were three round chins hanging on his breast, and more than a foot long, so that his face appeared to be the capital of a truncated column.

Thus Edward passed his life, sitting at a window on the ground floor looking out on the street, drinking from time to time a glass of ale, of which a pitcher of huge capacity

¹ Louis-Joseph-Charles-Amable, Duc de Luynes (1748-1807), one of the few nobles who did not emigrate during the first French Revolution, was a member of the Constituent Assembly as well as our author. — TR.

² This Roman emperor was Maximin. — TR.

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stood always near him. So extraordinary an appearance could scarcely fail to arrest the attention of the passers by; but they had to take care not to stop too long, as Edward quickly put them to flight by saying to them in a sepulchral voice: "What are you staring at like wild cats? Go your way, you lazy bodies! Begone, you good-for-nothing dogs!" and other similar amenities.

I often bowed to him and called him by name, and even several times conversed with him. He assured me that he did not at all feel dull or unhappy, and that if death did not intervene, he would willingly remain as he was to the end of the world.

From all that precedes we can see that if corpulence is not a malady, it is at least an untoward disposition which is almost always caused by our own fault. Another result is this, that every one should do his best to guard against corpulence when one does not suffer from it, and get rid of it when one does suffer from it; and it is in the interest of all persons that we investigate the researches which science, aided by observation, presents to us.

MEDITATION XXII

A PRESERVATIVE OR CURATIVE TREATMENT OF CORPULENCE ¹

106. I COMMENCE with a fact which proves that we must have determination either to preserve ourselves from corpulence, or to be cured from it.

M. Louis Greffulhe, whom His Majesty afterwards made a count, came to see me one morning, and told me that having learnt I had paid attention to the subject of corpulence, with which he was threatened, he came to ask my advice.

“Sir,” I said to him, “not having a doctor’s degree, I am free to refuse you as a patient. Nevertheless, I am at your orders, but on one condition, namely, that you will pledge me your word of honour to follow, for one month, the rule of conduct which I prescribe, with the strictest accuracy.”

M. Greffulhe made the required promise, shook me by the hand, and the next day I gave him the rules I wished him to observe, of which the first was to have himself weighed at the beginning and end of the treatment, so as to have a mathematical basis to ascertain the result.

One month afterwards, M. Greffulhe came to see me again, and spoke to me nearly in these words: —

¹ About twenty years ago I undertook a formal treatise on Corpulence. My readers should, above all, regret the preface; it was written in a dramatic form, and in it I proved to a physician that a fever was much less dangerous than a law suit; for the latter, after having made the client run about, wait, lie, and swear, after having indefinitely deprived him of rest, pleasure, and money, yet finishes by making him ill, and brings him to a bad end; a truth which is as good to propagate as any other.

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“Sir, I have followed your prescription as if my life depended on it, and I have ascertained that during the month I have lost three pounds and even a little more; but in order to arrive at this result, I have been obliged to do such violence to all my tastes and all my habits, and in one word I have suffered so much, that, whilst offering you my best thanks for your good advice, I renounce any advantage resulting from it, and await for the future the fate Providence has ordained for me.”

After this resolution, which I did not hear without pain, the result was as might have been anticipated. M. Greffulhe became more corpulent, suffered all the inconveniences of extreme obesity, and scarcely had reached forty when he died of the consequences of a disease of the respiratory organs, of which he had had some attacks before.

GENERAL RULES

107. Every cure of corpulence must commence with these three rules, which are absolute in their theory: Discretion in eating, moderation in sleep, exercise on-foot or on horse-back.

These are the first resources that science presents to us; nevertheless, I do not count much on them, for I know men and things, and also that any prescription not literally followed, cannot produce any effect. I know also that: —

1. Much resolution is needed to be able to leave the dinner-table with an appetite, for as long as this craving is felt, one morsel calls forth another with an irresistible attraction, and, as a general rule, men eat as long as they feel hungry, in spite of doctors, and even by the example of doctors.

2. To propose to any of our stout friends to get up early

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in the morning, is to stab him to the heart; they will tell you that their health cannot stand it; that, when they get up early of a morning, they are good for nothing nearly the whole day; the ladies will complain that they will be black under the eyes. They one and all are willing to sit up late, but they will stick to lie late in bed in the morning; and thus my second resource is lost.

3. Exercise on horseback is an expensive remedy, which neither suits all incomes nor all conditions of life.

Propose to a pretty corpulent lady to go out for a ride, and she will gladly consent, but on three conditions; firstly, that she shall have a horse, handsome, spirited, and gentle; secondly, that she shall have a new riding-habit, and cut in the latest fashion; and thirdly, that she shall have a gentleman to accompany her, who is young, good-tempered, and handsome. It is rather rare to find all these three things, and riding is thus given up.

Exercise on foot meets with several other objections. It tires one to death; it produces perspiration, and one is apt to catch pleurisy; the dust ruins the stockings, the stones come in the little shoes, and it is impossible to continue it.

Finally, if after these various attempts the slightest touch of headache is felt; if a little pimple as large as the head of a pin comes on the skin, it is attributed to the diet; it is abandoned, and the doctor gets in a rage.

Thus, it being agreed that all persons who wish to see their corpulence decrease should eat in moderation, sleep little, and take as much exercise as possible, we must, therefore, seek another road to attain the same object.

Now, there exists an infallible method for preventing corpulence from becoming excessive, or for diminishing it when it has become so.

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This method, which is founded on everything that is most certain in physics and chemistry, consists in a dietetic regimen suited to the effect sought to be obtained.

Of all medical resources, a fixed diet is the first, because it acts continually by day or night, awake or asleep, because the effect is renewed at every meal, and gradually exerts its influence on every portion of the individual.

Now the anti-corpulent diet is indicated by the most common and the most active cause of the disease, and as it has already been shown that starchy and farinaceous foods form fatty matter both in men and animals; since, with regard to the latter, this effect is produced every day before our eyes, and gives rise to the trade of fattening animals, we may deduce from this, as an exact consequence, that more or less strict abstinence from all that is feculent tends to the diminution of corpulence. "Good Heavens!" all my male and female readers will exclaim; "Good Heavens, how cruel the professor is! In a few words he forbids everything we like, those white rolls of Limet, those biscuits of Achard, those cakes of . . . and so many good things which are made with flour and butter, with flour and sugar, and with flour, sugar, and eggs! He has no mercy either on potatoes or on macaroni! Could we have expected this from a lover of good living who appeared so kind?"

"What do I hear?" I reply, assuming that stern countenance I only put on once a year. "Well, eat and grow fat; become ugly, heavy, asthmatic, and die choked by your own fat; I'll make a note of it, and you shall figure in the second edition of this work. . . . But what do I see? a single phrase has conquered you; you are afraid, and you entreat me not to launch my thunderbolt. Reassure yourself, I am going to prescribe your diet, and will prove to you

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how much pleasure you may still expect on this earth where one lives to eat.

“You like bread? well, eat rye bread. The estimable Cadet de Vaux¹ has long ago extolled its virtues. It is not so nourishing and not so agreeable as ordinary bread, which makes it the easier for you to comply with my rule. For to make certain of oneself, one ought above all to flee temptation. Remember this well; this is a moral law.

“You like soup? Then eat *julienne*, with green vegetables, cabbage, and things that grow under ground.² I forbid soup made with bread, with all kinds of macaroni, and also *purées*.

“At the first course, everything is at your service, with a few exceptions, such as poultry stewed with rice, and the crust of hot pastry. Eat, but be circumspect, so as not to satisfy later a want which does no longer exist.

“The second course appears, and now all your philosophy will be needed. Avoid farinaceous food, whatever form it assumes, and stick to roast meat, salads, and herbaceous vegetables; and, if a few sweets must be allowed to you, take in preference chocolate creams, and jellies flavoured with rum, oranges, and other things of the same sort.

“Now comes the dessert, and with it a fresh danger; but if up to the present time you have behaved well, you must still keep up your courage. Avoid the corners of the table, for there cakes more or less ornamented make their appearance: do not look at sweet biscuits nor at the macaroons; there remain to you all kinds of fruit, preserves, and many

¹ Cadet-de-Vaux (1743–1828), a celebrated chemist, of undoubted honesty, who studied, above all, sanitary laws, and wrote several books on them. — TR.

² All things growing under ground are now considered fattening. — TR.

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things that you may safely pick out, according to my principles.

“After dinner, I prescribe coffee, allow you a liqueur,¹ and advise you to take tea and punch when opportunity offers.

“At breakfast take rye bread as a matter of course, and chocolate rather than coffee. Nevertheless, I allow coffee rather strong, with milk, and other things at discretion, but no eggs. But you cannot breakfast too early. When you breakfast late, the dinner comes before the digestion is finished; you do not eat less, and this eating without appetite is a very active cause of corpulence, because it occurs so frequently.”

CONTINUATION OF THE REGIMEN

108. Up to the present time I have in a fatherly, tender, and rather kind manner, given you all the details of a regimen which will drive away the corpulence which threatens you. A few more prescriptions must be added for those who are already attacked by it.

Drink, every summer, thirty bottles of Seltzer water, one large tumbler in the morning, two others before lunch, and as many at bed-time. Drink commonly light, acid, white wines, like those of Anjou, and avoid beer as you would the plague. Ask often for radishes, artichokes with oil and vinegar, asparagus, celery, and cardoons. Among meats choose veal and poultry, and only eat the crust of bread. In doubtful cases, take the advice of a doctor who follows my principles, and whatever may be the time when you began to adopt these directions, you will speedily

¹ Preserves and liqueurs are absolutely forbidden at the present time to corpulent people. — TR.

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become renovated, pretty, lithesome, in good health, and ready for anything.

After having thus put you on your way, I must also show you the shoals, lest in excess of zeal against corpulency, you overstep the limit.

The shoal that I wish to point out is the habitual use of acids, which ignorant people sometimes counsel to take, and of which experience has always demonstrated the evil effects.

DANGER OF ACIDS

109. Amongst women an unhappy doctrine prevails, which kills every year many young girls, namely, that acids, and especially vinegar, are preservatives against corpulence.

Without doubt the continual use of acids causes leanness, but it also destroys the freshness of youth, health, and life; and though lemonade is the most pleasant of these acids, there are few stomachs that can stand it for any length of time.

The truth I have just stated cannot be too well known, for there are few of my readers who could not give me some examples to support it, and amongst them I choose the following, which came under my own personal observation.

In 1776 I lived at Dijon, and studied law there; I also attended a course of chemistry under M. Guyton Morveau, then advocate-general,¹ and a course of domestic medicine under M. Maret, perpetual secretary of the Academy of Dijon, and father of the Duke of Bassano.²

¹ Guyton Morveau (1737-1816), at first advocate-general at the *parlement* of Dijon, abandoned the law to study chemistry, in which he became very eminent, and was made a baron by Napoleon I. — TR.

² Hugues Maret was a medical man at Dijon. His son, the Duke of

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I became very great friends with one of the prettiest girls of whom my memory has preserved the recollection.

We were only "very great friends," which is strictly true and rather surprising, for I was at that time very much inclined to form closer and dearer links.

This friendship, which must really be taken for what it was, and not for what it might have become, was characterised by a familiarity that, from the very first day, became a confidence, appearing to us quite natural; and we had no end of private chats, which did not alarm her mother, as they were innocent, and worthy of the primitive ages.

Louise was, as I have said, very pretty, and, above all, in a just proportion, possessed that classical fulness of form which charms our eyes, and is one of the glories of the imitative arts.

Although I was only her friend, I was very far from being blind to the attractions she displayed, or which I thought she had; and perhaps they added, without my suspecting it, to the pure sentiment that attached me to her.

However, one evening, when I had looked at Louise with more attention than usual, I said to her, "My dear girl, you are ill; you appear to be getting thinner." "Oh, no," she replied with a sort of melancholy smile, "I am quite well; and if I am somewhat thinner, I can very well afford to lose a little fat without impoverishing myself." "Lose fat!" I replied energetically to her; "there is no need for your losing nor gaining any; keep as you are, you look 'scrumptious,' and other expressions of that sort which a young fellow of twenty always has at his fingers' ends.

Bassano (1763-1839), the intimate confidant of Napoleon I, was Secretary of State, and for some time Minister of Foreign Affairs. — TR.

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After this conversation, I watched this young girl with an interest not free from uneasiness; and soon I saw her complexion grow more pale, her cheeks become hollow, and her charms fading. . . . Alas! what a fragile and transient thing beauty is!

Finally, I met her at a ball, where she still went as usual. I asked her to sit down and rest a little, and, making the best of my time, she confessed to me that, feeling annoyed by the jokes of some of her companions, who were saying to her that in two years she would be as stout as St. Christopher,¹ and listening to the advice of a few others, she had tried to make herself thinner, and to succeed in this, had been drinking, for the past month, a glass of vinegar every morning; she told me also up till now no one had been let into her confidence.

I shuddered at this confession; I felt the whole extent of the danger, and told it next day to Louise's mother, who was as much alarmed as I was, for she doted upon her daughter.

No time was lost; the doctors were called in, consultations were held, and remedies were prescribed; but it was useless! The sources of life had been attacked to their very foundations; and that same moment, when it was supposed there was danger, the case was already hopeless.

Thus, for having followed imprudent advice, the charming Louise, reduced to that frightful state which accompanies consumption, fell asleep forevermore, scarcely eighteen years old.

She died casting longing looks towards a future that for

¹ A colossal statue, supposed to be of this saint, stood, until 1784, before the Church of Notre Dame in Paris; hence the allusion. — Tr.

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her did not exist; and the thought of having attempted her own life, although involuntarily, rendered her end more unhappy, and accelerated it.

She was the first person I saw die; and she breathed her last in my arms, at the moment when she wished me to lift her up to let her see the dawn. Some hours after her death, her disconsolate mother begged me to accompany her in paying a last visit to what remained of her daughter; and we observed with surprise that her countenance had assumed a sort of radiance and ecstasy which previously had not been there. I was astonished, and the mother drew from it a consolatory augury. Such a change is, however, not rare, and Lavater mentions it in his "Treatise on Physiognomy."

ANTI-CORPULENCE BELT

110. Every treatment for the reduction of corpulence ought to be accompanied by a precaution I had forgotten, and which I should have mentioned sooner, namely, by wearing day and night a belt compressing the stomach sufficiently.

The necessity for this is obvious, for the vertebral column, which forms one of the walls of the intestinal cavity, is firm and inflexible; hence the greater weight of the intestines, when corpulence makes them deviate from the vertical line, causes them to press against the various coats of the stomach.¹ These coats can be stretched to almost any extent, and have not always sufficient elasticity to go back to their former place when the effort diminishes,

¹ Mirabeau, referring to a man excessively corpulent, said that he had only been created to show to what extent the human skin could be stretched without bursting.

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so that any contrivance supported by the dorsal column, keeps the stomach within bounds, and restores the equilibrium.

Thus, this belt prevents the stomach from yielding finally to the actual weight of the intestines, and gives it the necessary force to contract gradually, when this weight diminishes.

This belt should always be worn, otherwise the advantage gained in the day will be destroyed when it is left off during the night; but it is not inconvenient, and one gets soon accustomed to it.

The belt, which also serves as a monitor to show when any one has eaten enough, should be carefully made; for the pressure ought always to be moderate as well as always the same, so that it should contract when corpulence decreases.

A person is not obliged to wear it all his life; it may be laid aside without inconvenience when he has reached the desired limit, and when the stomach has not increased in size for some weeks, though, of course, he must observe a proper diet. Let me finally mention that for the last six years I myself have not worn any belt.

PERUVIAN BARK

111. I think one substance is decidedly anticorpulent; several observations have led me to think so; nevertheless, I still have my doubts, and I trust the doctors will try it, and communicate the results.

This substance is Peruvian bark.

Ten or twelve of my acquaintances suffered from intermittent fever for a long time; some were cured by old women's remedies, powders, and so on; others by the

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continual use of Peruvian bark, which never fails in its effect.

All those who took powders, etc., and were stout, recovered their former corpulence; all those who took bark did not again become corpulent; which leads me to think that it produced this last result, for there was no difference between them except in the method of their cure.

This inference is not contrary to reason. For, on the one hand, Peruvian bark, increasing the force of all vital powers, gives to circulation an activity which troubles and disperses the gases which develop fat. And, on the other hand, it is proved that there is in bark some tannine which may close the capsules, which in ordinary cases contain fat. It is even probable that these two effects combine and strengthen each other.

It is after these experiments, of which every person can appreciate the value, that I think I may advise the use of bark to all those who desire to get rid of a corpulence that has become uncomfortable. Therefore, *dummodo annuerint in omni medicationes genere doctissimi facultatis professores*; or in English, so long as the most learned professors of the faculty agree in every kind of medicine, I think that, after the first month of a suitable regimen, the person who wishes to get thinner, would do well to take for a month, every other day, at seven o'clock in the morning, two hours before breakfast, a glass of dry white wine, in which has been mixed a teaspoonful of the best Peruvian bark, and good results will follow. Such are the means with which I propose to combat an inconvenience as troublesome as it is common; I have adapted them to human weakness, such as we find it in the present state of society.

For that purpose I have acted on this truism: that the

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more severe any system of treatment is, the less is the effect produced, because it is badly followed, or is not followed at all.

Great efforts are rare; and if we wish our advice to be followed, we must only prescribe to men what is easy for them, and even, if we can, what is pleasant.

MEDITATION XXIII

ON LEANNESS

DEFINITION

112. LEANNESS is that condition when a person's muscles are not filled up by fat, and when he shows the outline of the bony framework in all its angularity.

KINDS OF LEANNESS

There are two kinds of leanness, the first, the result of the primitive disposition of the body, is accompanied by health, and the complete exercise of all organic functions; the second has for its cause the feebleness of certain organs, and the defective action of some others, and gives to the person attacked by it a wretched and mean appearance. I knew a young woman of average height who only weighed sixty-five pounds.

EFFECTS OF LEANNESS

113. Leanness is no great disadvantage for men; they are quite as strong and far more active. Thus, the father of the young lady just mentioned, although almost as lean as she was, was strong enough to lift with his teeth a heavy chair, and to throw it behind him, over his head.

But it is a frightful evil for women, for with them beauty is more than life, and beauty consists above all in the roundness of limb, and in gracefully curved outlines. The choicest of toilettes, the most sublime of dressmakers, cannot disguise certain deficiencies, or conceal certain



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angles; and it is said commonly that a lean lady, however beautiful she appears, loses something of her charms whenever she takes a pin out of her dress.

For skinny people there is no remedy, except to consult a member of the medical profession, and the regimen requires so much time, that it will be long before they are cured.

Women who are born lean, and have a good digestion, cannot be more difficult to fatten than poultry is; and if we take a little more time, it is because women have a comparatively smaller stomach, and cannot bear as rigorous and as punctual a diet as those devoted animals.

This comparison is the prettiest I could find; I wanted one, and ladies will pardon me, I trust, on account of the praiseworthy intentions with which this chapter is written.

NATURAL PREDESTINATION

114. Nature, varied in its work, has models for leanness as well as for corpulency.

Those who are destined to be lean have an elongated shape. Their hands and feet are small, their legs slender, the back and lower part of the body are not filled out, their ribs are prominent, the nose is aquiline, the eyes almond-shaped, the mouth large, the chin pointed, and the hair is brown.

Such is the general type; some parts of the body may not be what I have described, but this is rarely the case.

We see sometimes lean persons eat a great deal. All whom I have asked acknowledged that they digested their food badly, and this is why they always remain in the same state.

There are thin people of every complexion and of every

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shape; and we can distinguish them, as they have nothing striking, either by their features or in their gait; their eyes are very dull, their lips pale, and their whole countenance indicates want of energy, weakness, and something that resembles suffering. One might almost say that they look as if they had not been completely finished, and as if the lamp of life within them had not yet been properly lighted.

A FATTENING DIET

115. Every woman who is thin likes to be stouter. It is a wish we have heard a thousand times; and it is for this reason and to render homage to this all-powerful sex that we will endeavour to show them how to replace by a natural figure those silk or cotton shapes which are seen exposed profusely in fashionable linen-draper's shops, to the great scandal of the passers-by, who are quite horrified, and turn away from those deceptive chimeras with as much or more care than if the reality itself were presented to their eyes.

The whole secret of becoming stout consists in a proper diet. We have only to eat and to choose our foods.

With this regimen the positive prescriptions as regards rest or sleep are really of no consequence, yet we do not the less obtain our object.

For, if you do not take exercise, it will assist you to become fat; if you do so, you will become still stouter, for you will eat more, and when the appetite is skilfully satisfied, you not only repair waste, but you even acquire strength when needed.

If you sleep much you will grow fat; if you sleep little you will digest quicker, and you will eat more.

We have, therefore, merely to show what those who

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wish to round their form should always eat; and this task is not difficult, as may be seen from different rules we have already laid down.

To solve this problem, we must present to the stomach food that fills it without fatiguing it, and that can be assimilated and converted into fat.

Let us try and give an outline of what a sylph or a sylphide should eat during the day if they feel disposed to assume a more material form.

As a general rule, plenty of newly-baked bread, made during the day, should be eaten, and above all the crumb.

In the morning, before eight o'clock, and even in bed if necessary, take a small basin of soup with bread or paste, not too much, so that it may digest sooner, or, if you like it, a cup of good chocolate.

At eleven o'clock, breakfast with newly-laid eggs, beaten up over the fire or fried, and a pie or cutlet, or anything else you like; the main point is to eat eggs; a cup of coffee will also do no harm.

The dinner hour has to be regulated in such a manner that the breakfast is digested before again sitting down to table; for we have often said that to eat one meal before another is digested is as bad as embezzlement.

After breakfast a little exercise must be taken; the men, if their profession does not prevent them doing so, for duty before everything; the ladies may go to the Bois de Boulogne, to the Tuileries, to their dressmaker, their milliner, go shopping, or even visit some of their friends to have a chat about what they have seen. Such a bit of gossip will certainly do the ladies good, as it gives them much satisfaction.

At dinner, take as much soup, meat, and fish as you like,

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taking care to add dishes containing rice, macaroni, sweet pastry, sweet creams, "charlottes," and so forth.

At dessert eat Savoy cakes, sponge cakes, and such preparations as contain starch, eggs, and sugar.

This diet, though apparently circumscribed, has, nevertheless, great variety; for the whole animal kingdom can be laid under contribution. And great care should be taken to change the different kinds of farinaceous foods, to prepare and season them, and to make them tasty by every known means, so as to prevent a dislike for them, an invincible obstacle to any further improvement.

Beer should be preferred, and, if you take wines, drink Bordeaux, or some from the south of France.

Acids are to be avoided, except salads, which gladden the heart; take sugar with the fruit when not too sweet. Baths should not be taken too cold: endeavour to breathe from time to time the pure country air. Eat plenty of grapes in season, and do not fatigue yourself at any ball by dancing too much.

You should go to bed about eleven o'clock on ordinary days, and not later than one on festive days.

If this regimen be followed exactly and resolutely, the deficiencies of Nature will soon be filled up; the health will be improved as much as beauty, and pleasure will be enjoyed all the more, so that accents of gratitude will fall agreeably on the ear of the professor.

Sheep, calves, oxen, poultry, carp, crayfish, and oysters, are fattened, and hence I draw the general maxim: *Whatever eats can be fattened, providing the food is good, and well chosen.*

MEDITATION XXIV

OF FASTING

DEFINITION

116. FASTING is a voluntary abstention from food for some moral or religious purpose.

Although fasting be contrary to one of our inclinations, or rather to one of our most habitual wants, it is nevertheless of the highest antiquity.

ORIGIN OF FASTING

The learned explain its origin as follows: —

In family afflictions, they say, when a father, a mother, a beloved child, happens to die, the whole household is in mourning; they weep, the body is washed and embalmed, and it is buried with funeral rites suitable to its condition when alive. On these occasions no one thinks of eating, and they fast without noticing it.

In the same manner, on days of public mourning, when there has been a drought or heavy rains for a very long time, when cruel wars or epidemics rage, scourges against which our strength or our industry are powerless, men shed tears, impute all such inflictions to the wrath of the gods, humiliate themselves before them, and mortify themselves by abstinence. The inflictions cease; and we are convinced that they stopped because we fasted and prayed, so we continue to have recourse to it in similar circumstances.

Thus men suffering from public or private calamities give themselves up to sadness, and neglect to take nourishment;

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and, afterwards, they look upon this voluntary abstinence as an act of religion.

They imagined that in macerating their body when their soul was sad, the gods might be moved to mercy; and all nations, moved by such thoughts, conceived the idea of mourning, prayer, mortification, and abstinence.

Finally, the Saviour, having come upon earth, sanctified fasting, and all Christian sects adopted it, with more or less modifications.

HOW PEOPLE USED TO FAST

117. I must admit that this habit of fasting has singularly fallen into disuse; and, as it may serve for the edification or for the conversion of unbelievers, I will relate here how we lived towards the middle of the eighteenth century.

On ordinary days we breakfasted before nine o'clock on bread, cheese, and fruits, and sometimes a pie and cold meat.

Between noon and one o'clock we dined, beginning with the customary soup or broth, more or less well supplemented, according to our income and other circumstances.

About four o'clock we had a little snack. This repast was light, and specially for children and for those who prided themselves of sticking to old customs.

But other repasts took place, commencing at five o'clock, and lasting any length of time. They were usually very gay, and suited ladies wonderfully well, so that often they gave them amongst themselves, when all men were excluded. I find in my Secret Memoirs that a good deal of slander and gossip was going on there.

OF FASTING

Towards eight o'clock came supper with entrées, roasts, entremets, salads, and dessert; people conversed, had a game of cards, and then went to bed.

In Paris magnificent suppers have always been given, which began after the theatre was over. The guests were according to circumstances, pretty women, fashionable actresses, elegant professional beauties, noble lords, capitalists, rakes, and witty fellows.

They talked of the events of the day; they sang the last new song; they had a chat on politics, literature, spectacles, and above all, they made love.

Let us now glance at what was done on fasting-days.

Meat could not be had; people had no breakfast; and consequently were more hungry than usual.

At the regular hour they dined as hearty as they could, but fish and vegetables are soon digested, and before five o'clock every one was ravenous; some were looking at their watches and did their best to be patient; others were working themselves into a passion, even when securing their salvation.

About eight o'clock they had not a good supper, but a "collation," a word borrowed from the convent, and so called because at the end of the day the monks assembled to hold conferences on the fathers of the Church; after which they were allowed a glass of wine.

At the "collation," neither butter, eggs, nor anything that had been alive, was served. They were obliged, then, to be satisfied with salads, preserves, and fruits, — a food, alas! not very suitable to the appetites people had in those times; but patience was practised for the love of Heaven, they went to bed, and began again the same programme every day during Lent.

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I have been told that the people who gave the little suppers I have mentioned did not fast, and never have fasted.

The greatest culinary triumph of those former times was to produce a strictly canonical collation, and which, nevertheless, looked like a good supper.

Science solved this problem by tolerating fish dressed *au bleu*, cullis made of vegetables which grow under ground, and pastry fried in oil.

The strict observance of the Lenten fast gave rise to a pleasure unknown at present — namely, that of breaking our fast by breakfasting on Easter Day.

A close observation shows us that the elements of our pleasures are, difficulty, privation, desire, and enjoyment. All these elements are found in breaking the fast, and I have seen two of my great-uncles, intelligent, serious men, almost faint with pleasure when on Easter Day a ham was carved, or a meat-pie cut in. But a degenerate race like the present cannot experience such powerful sensation.

ORIGIN OF THE RELAXATION OF FASTING

118. I have seen this relaxation arise, and that gradually.

Young people up to a certain age were not compelled to fast, and pregnant women, or who thought themselves so, were also exempted, by virtue of their position, and meat and a supper were served to them, which was a great temptation to those who kept the fast.

Then, grown-up people began to find out that fasting irritated them, gave them a headache, and prevented them from sleeping. Then was ascribed to fasting all those little accidents which happen to men at the spring-time of the year, such as vernal eruptions, giddiness, bleeding at the

OF FASTING

nose, and other symptoms of effervescence which indicate the renewal of nature. So that one person did not fast because he thought himself ill; another because he had been ill; and a third because he was afraid he was going to be ill; and thus it happened that fasting and collations became every day more rare.

This is not all. Some writers were so severe that people began to fear vegetables would wholly fail, so the ecclesiastical authorities relaxed their strictness officially; householders complained of the increased expense caused by a Lenten diet; others said that Heaven did not wish any one to ruin one's health, and some men of little faith even added that one could not get into Paradise by famine.

Nevertheless, the duty of fasting was recognised, and nearly always a permission to eat meat was asked from the priest, who rarely refused it, but who made it, however, always a condition that some alms should be given to replace abstinence.

Finally, the Revolution came, filling the minds of all with cares, fears, and interests of another nature; so that there was neither time nor opportunity to have recourse to the priests, of whom some were pursued as enemies to the State, which did not prevent others being treated as schismatics.

To this cause, which happily exists no longer, another and a not less influential one should be added. We have completely changed the hour of our meals; we do not eat either so frequently or at the same time as our ancestors, and fasting would have to be organised afresh.

This is so patent a fact that, although I only visit men of regular habits, intelligent, and who are more or less believers, I do not think that during the last five-and-twenty

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years I have seen outside my own home ten Lenten meals and one single collation.

Many people would have felt very awkward in such a case; but I know what St. Paul has written, and I trust to his wisdom.¹

Moreover, it will be a gross mistake to think that this new order of things has fostered intemperance.

The number of meals has been reduced by nearly half; drunkenness has disappeared, to take refuge on certain days amongst the lowest classes of society; no more wild revelry is going on, and a man of dissolute or sottish habits would no longer be received anywhere. More than one-third of the Parisians take in the morning only a slight lunch, and if some persons abandon themselves to the delights of a refined and select *gourmandise*, I do not see why we should blame them for this, for I have shown already that everybody gains, and that nobody loses, by it.

I cannot finish this chapter without observing that the tastes of the people have undergone a complete change.

Every day thousands of men go to the theatre or to the *café* who, forty years ago, would have spent their evenings in the public-houses.

Economy certainly gains nothing by this new arrangement; but it is very advantageous to their manners, for they become improved by the stage, whilst their minds receive some information by reading newspapers, and undoubtedly they are saved from the quarrels, the diseases, and the brutality which seem the invariable results of frequenting public-houses.

¹ This refers, I suppose, to "Unto the pure all things are pure" (Epistle to Titus, i, 15).—TB.

MEDITATION XXV

ON EXHAUSTION

119. WE understand by exhaustion a state of weakness, languor, and depression caused by antecedent circumstances, and which impedes the action of the vital functions.

We can, without including the exhaustion caused by the privation of food, mention three different kinds: —

Exhaustion caused by muscular fatigue; exhaustion caused by mental action; and exhaustion caused by genetic excesses.

A common remedy for those three kinds of exhaustion is the immediate cessation of the acts producing this condition, which, if not illness, is very akin to it.

TREATMENT

120. After these indispensable preliminaries, let me state that to cure it gastronomy is ever at hand to present her resources.

To a man overcome by too long a strain upon his muscular powers, she offers good soup, generous wine, tender meat, and sleep.

To the man of learning who has been led by the charms of his subject to overtask his powers, she offers exercise in the open air to refresh his brain, a bath to relax his irritated nerves, fowls, vegetables, and rest.

Finally, by the following cure we may learn what it can

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do for a man who forgets that sensuousness has its limits and pleasure its dangers: —

A CURE PERFORMED BY THE PROFESSOR

121. I went one day to pay a visit to one of my best friends, M. Rubat. He told me that he was ill, and, in fact, I found him in a dressing-gown by his fireside, and in an attitude of extreme depression.

His looks frightened me, for his face was pale, his eyes glaring, and his lips were dropping in such a manner as to show the teeth of the lower jaw, which was something frightful to behold.

I inquired, full of anxiety, what had caused this sudden change? He hesitated; I urged him to tell it to me, and after some resistance, he stammered forth, whilst blushing, “My dear friend, you know that my wife is jealous of me, and that this idea of hers has made me pass many wretched moments. A few days ago she took a terrible fit of jealousy, and it is by my wishing to prove that she has lost nothing of my affection, and that no portion of the conjugal tribute has been paid to her detriment, that I have brought myself to this condition.” — “You have, then, forgotten that you are forty-five, and that jealousy is an evil without remedy? Do you not know *furens quid fœmina possit?*” I also used some other expressions, not very gallant, for I was in a rage.

“Now,” I continued, “your pulse is slow, thin, and very weak; what are you going to do?” — “The doctor, who has just left me, thinks I am nervous and feverish, and has ordered me to be bled; the surgeon will be here immediately.”

“Don’t let the surgeon come near you,” I exclaimed,

ON EXHAUSTION

“or you are a dead man. Drive him away as if he were a murderer, and say to him that your body and soul belong to me. Tell me, also, does your doctor know the accidental cause of your illness?” — “Alas, no: A false shame has prevented my making this confession to him!”

“Well, ask him to come and see you as soon as possible. I am going to make you up a draught, but in the mean while take this.” I gave him a glass of water with a good deal of sugar in it, which he swallowed with the confidence of Alexander, and with blind faith.¹

I then left him, and went home to mix, prepare, and elaborate a restorative draught, of which the recipe will be found in the “Varieties,”² as well as the different ways I employed to make as much haste as possible; for in such a case, a few hours delay may cause irreparable accidents.

I soon came back with my draught, and found him already better; the colour had reappeared on his cheeks, the eye was not so glaring; but the lip still dropped and gave him a frightful appearance.

The doctor soon came; I told him what I had done, and then the sick man made his confession. On the countenance of the physician a severe frown appeared; but soon he looked at us with a slightly ironical air, and said to my friend: “You ought not to be astonished that I could not guess you were suffering from an illness neither becoming your age nor your condition of life, though you were modest

¹ Alexander the Great, was informed that his physician had been bribed to poison him. Being not very well, he sent for him, told him what he had heard, and then, casting a glance on the physician’s countenance, swallowed, without hesitation, the draught the latter had just given him. The French for “blind faith” is “la foi du charbonnier,” because charcoal-burners are simple-minded men, and easily believe anything. — *TR.*

² See at the end of this volume, “Varieties,” no. x.

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enough to conceal the cause, which can only do you great credit. I have also to scold you because you might have led me to make a mistake which would have become fatal to you. Moreover, my learned brother," added he, with a bow I returned to him tenfold, "has told you what to do; therefore, take his broth, or by whatever name he calls it, and if you get rid of your fever, as I believe you will, breakfast to-morrow with a cup of chocolate, in which you'll beat up the yolks of two fresh eggs."

With these words he took his cane and his hat and left us, whilst we were very much tempted to make fun of him.

Soon I gave to my patient a large cup of my elixir of life; he drank it eagerly, and wished to take another cup: but I begged him to wait for two hours, and then gave him a second dose before I went away.

Next day the fever had left him, and he was almost well. He breakfasted as the doctor had ordered him, took some more doses of my draught, and was able in two days to return to his ordinary occupation; but the hanging lip did not resume its place till after the third day.

In a little time my friend's accident got bruited about, and all the ladies chatted about it among themselves.

Some admired my friend, nearly all pitied him, but the professor of gastronomy received great praise.

MEDITATION XXVI

ON DEATH

*Omnia mors poscit; lex est, non pœna perire.*¹

122. THE Creator has imposed on man six great and principal necessities, which are: birth, action, eating, sleep, reproduction, and death.

Death is the absolute interruption of sensual relations, and the absolute annihilation of vital forces, which abandon the body to the laws of decomposition.

These various necessities are all accompanied, and alleviated, by some sensations of pleasure, and death itself is not without its charms when it is natural; that is to say, when the body has passed through the various stages of growth, virility, old age, and decrepitude, to which it is destined.

If I had not resolved only to give a very short chapter, I might aid the physicians who have noted how an animated body passes into a state of inert matter gradually and slowly.

I might quote philosophers, kings, men of letters, who, on the confines of eternity, far from being a prey to grief, had pleasant thoughts, and enhanced them by the charm of poetry.

I might recall the reply of Fontenelle,² who on his death-

¹ Death demands all things: to die is a law, not a punishment.

² Bernard le Bouyer de Fontenelle (1657-1757), a nephew, through the mother's side, of the celebrated poet, Pierre Corneille, an author, a mathematician, and a philosopher, was for forty-two years secretary of the French Academy of Sciences, and is chiefly known by his *Dialogues des Morts*, his *Entretiens sur la pluralité des Mondes*; and his *Eloges des Académiciens*. — TR.

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bed, being asked what he felt, replied, "Nothing but a difficulty of living."

But I prefer only to give my ideas about death, based, not merely on analogy, but also on several carefully made observations, and of which the last one is as follows: —

I had a grand-aunt, ninety-three years old, who was dying. Although confined to her bed for some time, she had all her faculties, and her state was only perceptible by the loss of her appetite, and the weakening of her voice.

She had always shown great affection for me, and I was by her bedside ready to wait upon her lovingly, which did not prevent my looking at her with that philosophical eye with which I always scan all that is going on around me.

"Are you near me, nephew?" she asked, in a voice scarcely articulate. "Yes, aunt; can I do anything for you? I think a little very fine old wine will do you good." — "Give it to me then, my dear; a liquid will always go down." I got it as quickly as I could, and raising her up gently, I made her swallow half a glass of the best wine. She instantly revived, and turning on me eyes that had been very fine, said, "I thank you very much for this last service you render me. If you ever get to my age you will see that death becomes a want just like sleep."

These were her last words, and half an hour afterwards she had fallen asleep for ever.

Dr. Richerand has described with so much truth and philosophy the last decay of the human body, and the last moments of the individual, that my readers will thank me for communicating to them the following passage: —

This is the order in which the intellectual faculties cease and become decomposed. Reason, this attribute of which man claims to be the sole possessor, abandons him. He begins by losing the

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power of connecting his thoughts, and soon after that of comparing, assembling, combining, and joining together various ideas in order to decide on their relations. Then people say the patient loses his head, that he is wandering in his mind, and that he is delirious. He raves usually about ideas familiar to him, and the ruling passion is easily recognised amidst it all; the miser talks about his hidden treasure in a most indiscreet way; another dies, seized with religious terrors. A happy recollection of an absent fatherland is then revived in a most delightful and energetic manner.

After reasoning and judgment, the faculty of associating ideas is attacked. This arises in the condition known as "fainting," and I have experienced it myself. I was one day talking with a friend when I felt an insurmountable difficulty in combining two ideas on whose similarity I wished to form an opinion. However, the syncope was not complete, for I kept still memory and the faculty of feeling; I heard distinctly the persons who were around me say, "He has fainted," and move about to get me out of that condition, "which was not without its pleasure."

Memory then becomes extinguished. The patient, who in his delirium recognised still those who came near him, finally fails to know his relatives, and even those persons with whom he was very intimate.

At last, he ceases to feel; but the senses cease to act in a gradual and determinate order. Taste and smell do not give any more signs of their existence; the eyes are covered with a dull film and have a sinister expression; the ear can still perceive sounds and noise.

No doubt, this is why the ancients were in the habit of shouting loudly in the ears of the dead to convince themselves that life had really left him. A moribund man is no longer able to smell, taste, see, or hear; but the sense of feeling remains, he moves about in his bed, throws his arms outside, changes his position every instant, and exercises, as we have already said, motions like those of the fœtus in the mother's womb. Death, which is going to strike him, can no longer cause him any fear, for he has no longer any ideas, and he finishes life as he commenced it, without being conscious of it.¹

¹ Richerand, *Nouveaux Eléments de Physiologie*, ninth edition, vol. II, p. 600.

MEDITATION XXVII

PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY OF COOKERY

123. COOKERY is the most ancient of the arts, for Adam was born hungry; and the infant, scarcely come into the world, utters cries which only the breast of the nurse can still.

It is of all the arts the one that has rendered the most important service to social life; for the necessities of preparing food have taught us how to use fire, and it is by fire that man has subdued Nature.

When we look at these things from a lofty point of view, we may count three sorts of culinary art.

The first is occupied by the preparation of foods, and has kept its primitive name.

The second is occupied with the analysis and verification of the elements, and we agree to call this "chemistry."

And the third, which may be called the kitchen to restore strength, is better known as "pharmaceutics."

If these differ in their object, they are connected by the application of fire, the use of ovens, and by employing the same sort of vases.

Thus, the cook will convert a piece of beef into soup and *bouilli*; the chemist will take a similar piece to discover its component parts; and the apothecary will make it leave the body, if by chance it has caused an indigestion.

ORDER OF FOODS

124. Man is an omnivorous animal; he has incisive teeth to divide fruits, molar teeth to grind grains, and dog teeth

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to tear flesh. The remark has been made that the closer man approaches the savage state, the stronger and more prominent are his dog teeth.

It is extremely probable that man was for a long time frugivorous by necessity, for of all animals of the ancient world, he moves with the greatest difficulty, and his means of attack are very limited unless he is armed.

But the inborn instinct of self-improvement became speedily developed; and the very consciousness of his weakness induced him to find out how to make some weapons; to which he was also impelled by the carnivorous instinct, as shown by his canine teeth. As soon as he was armed, the animals around him became his prey and his food.

This instinct of destruction still exists: children almost never fail to kill any little animals that are abandoned to them, and they would eat them if hungry.

It is not at all surprising that man should wish to feed on flesh; his stomach is very small, and fruits have too little animalisable substances, to be quite sufficient to restore him; he could much better live on vegetables, but this diet pre-supposes some arts which arose after the lapse of many centuries.

The first arms of man were the branches of trees; and later on, he had bows and arrows; for, wherever man is found, in every climate, and under whatever latitude, we always find him armed with bows and arrows. This uniformity is difficult to explain. We do not see how the same series of ideas has presented itself to individuals in such different circumstances; it must owe its origin to a cause hidden behind the veil of centuries.

Raw flesh has only one inconvenience; it sticks to the teeth on account of its ropiness, otherwise it is not at all

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disagreeable to the taste. Seasoned with a little salt, it is easily digested, and ought to be more nourishing than any other.

A captain of Croats, whom I had invited to dine with me in 1815, said: "Gad! there is no need of so much fuss to make a good dinner. When we take the field and feel hungry, we kill the very first animal that falls into our hands; we cut off a good thick slice; we sprinkle on it a little salt we have always in our 'sabretasche,' place it between the saddle and the horse's back, set off at a gallop for some time: *gnian, gnian, gnian, gnian!* we have a dinner fit for a prince"; and whilst saying this, he was working his jaws as if he were tearing the meat to pieces.

When the sportsmen of Dauphiné go out shooting in September, they are also provided with pepper and salt, and if one of them kills a very fat fig-pecker, he plucks it, seasons it, carries it for some time outside his cap, and eats it.

I have been told that a bird, cooked in this way, eats even better than if roasted.

Moreover, if our great-grandfathers ate their food raw, we have not altogether given up the habit. The most delicate palate will very well put up with Arles sausages, "mortadella di Bologna," Hamburg smoked beef, anchovies, pickled herrings, and other similar dainties, which have never seen the fire, and yet provoke appetite none the less.

DISCOVERY OF FIRE

125. After people had regaled themselves for a pretty long time in the manner of the Croats, fire was discovered; and this must again have been by chance, for fire does not

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generally exist spontaneously on this earth. The inhabitants of the Marianne Islands are said not to have been acquainted with it.

BAKING

126. As soon as fire was known, the instinct of improvement applied it to meats, firstly, to dry them, and secondly, to roast them on hot embers.

Meat thus treated was found much better than raw; it is firmer, tritulates with less difficulty, and the osmazome, by becoming browner, imparts to it a savoury aroma, which still continues to please us.

However, it was soon found that flesh cooked on the embers got rather dirty, for some ashes or some particles of coal always adhered to it, of which it was difficult to free it. To remedy this inconvenience, spits were used to hold the meat above the embers, which were supported on each side by stones of a suitable height.

Then the act of grilling or broiling was discovered, by which meat was prepared in a simple as well as a savoury way; for all grilled meat is very tasty, partly owing to the smoke.

Things were not much further advanced in the time of Homer; and I trust that it will be a pleasure for many of my readers to see how Achilleus entertained in his tent three of the principal Grecian chiefs, of whom one was a king.

I recommend this passage to the ladies, for Achilleus was the most handsome of the Greeks, though his pride did not prevent him from shedding tears when Briseis was taken from him.

The following passage from the ninth book of the "Iliad"

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is taken from the masterly translation of Mr. P. Stanhope Worsley:—

“ . . . Patroclus to his friend gave ear.
Then in the blazing firelight his great board
He planted, and thereon of hog, goat, sheep,
All flourishing with fat, the chine he stored.
These held Automedon, and wide and deep
Achilleus sliced, then spitted the full heap;
And a great fire divine Patroclus lit.
But when the crackling flame began to sleep,
He raked the embers, on the stones each spit
Laid, and the sacred salt then sprinkled, as is fit.
So with much care he roasted all the meat,
And on the table ranged it, and set bread
In silver baskets for the chiefs to eat.
Achilleus dealt out portions head by head,
Where he sat fronting, o’er the banquet spread,
Divine Odysseus from the adverse wall;
Then bade Patroclus in the fire to shed
The Gods’ due part, and he obeyed; and all,
With eager hand outstretched, upon the viands fall.
When the desire was quenched of food and drink,
Aias to Phoenix nodded, and divine
Odysseus in his heart knew what to think,
And brimmed his goblet, and held forth the wine,
And spake: ‘Achilles, hail, dear friend of mine!’”¹

Thus a king, a king’s son, and three Grecian chiefs dined very well on bread, wine, and broiled meat.

We imagine that if Achilleus and Patroclus prepared themselves the banquet, it was rather exceptional, and in order to do greater honour to the distinguished guests who visited them; for, usually the duties of dressing food were abandoned to women and slaves. This Homer tells us also,

¹ The following note is from the French of M. Brillat-Savarin: “I have not copied the original text, which few persons would have understood, but I thought it best to give a Latin version, because this language, being more widely known, and moulding itself perfectly on the Greek, lends itself better to the details and the simplicity of this heroic repast.” Our author gives also a rendering into French of this passage by M. Dugas-Montbel, whom he calls “a gentle author, polite, and rather fond of good living for a hellenist.”

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when he gives us in the "Odyssey" an account of the entertainment of the heralds.

The entrails of animals stuffed with blood and grease, a kind of black pudding, were regarded as a very important dish.

During this epoch, and without doubt long before poetry and music were associated with the pleasures of the tables, famous minstrels sang the wonders of Nature, the loves of the gods, and the achievements of warriors. They formed a sort of priesthood, and most likely the divine Homer himself was trained by some of these men favoured by Heaven. He could not have soared so high if his poetical studies had not commenced from his early youth.

Madame Dacier¹ remarks that Homer never makes mention of boiled meat in any part of his works. The Hebrews were much more advanced on account of having dwelt for a considerable time in Egypt; they had vessels to stand the fire, and it was in such a pot that the pottage of lentiles was made, which Jacob sold so dear to his brother Esau.²

It is really difficult to divine how man commenced to work metals. It is said that Tubal-Cain was the inventor of this art.

In the present state of our knowledge, one metal is used

¹ Anne Lefèvre (1654–1720), daughter of the celebrated classical scholar Tanneguy-Lefèvre, was married to André Dacier, as good a scholar as her father, and brought out several editions of various Latin and Greek classics, with and without her husband's aid. She is best known by her translation of the *Iliad*. According to Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson's excellent work, *A Book about the Table*, vol. I, ch. XIV, "Spits and Jacks": "Madame Dacier overstated the case when she remarked that Homer makes no mention of boiled meat. An instance against her assertion may be found in the Fifth Book of the *Iliad*, which Warner (*Antiquitates Culinarie*, 1791) produces as the only notice of boiling in the Homeric poems." — Tr.

² Gen. xxv, 34. — Tr.

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by us to treat another metal; we hold them with iron tongs; we forge them with iron hammers; we cut them with steel files, but as yet I have never met any person who could explain to me how the first pair of tongs or the first hammer were made.

FEASTS OF THE ORIENTALS — OF THE GREEKS

127. Cooking made great progress when we had either iron or earthenware pots that could stand the heat; we could then season meats, cook vegetables, and soup; gravy, and jellies could be made. All these things follow and are connected with one another.

The most ancient books extant make honourable mention of the feasts of the Eastern kings. It is not difficult to believe that those monarchs who ruled over countries fertile in everything, and especially in spices and perfumes, kept sumptuous tables; but details are wanting; we only know that Cadmus, who introduced writing into Greece, had been cook to the King of Sidon.

It was also among those voluptuous and effeminate nations that the custom was introduced of surrounding with couches the banqueting tables, and of lying down to eat.

This refinement, which rather denotes weakness, was not everywhere well received. Those peoples who held strength and courage in especial esteem, those amongst whom frugality was deemed a virtue, rejected it for a long time; but it was adopted at Athens, and was for many years the general custom throughout the civilised world.

Cookery and its pleasures were in great favour among the Athenians, a people of elegant taste, and eager for novelties. Kings, private men of wealth, poets, and learned men, gave the example, and even the philosophers did not

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think they had a right of refusing to share the enjoyments drawn from the bosom of Nature.

From what we read in ancient authors, there is no doubt that their feasts were of the highest quality.

Hunting, fishing, and commerce procured them many of the objects which are still considered excellent, and competition made them rise to an excessive price.

All the arts rivalled with each other for the adornment of their tables, around which the guests were placed, lying on couches covered with rich purple hangings.

They made it a study to enhance the pleasures of the table by agreeable conversation, and table-talk became a science.

The songs introduced towards the third course lost their ancient simplicity; they no longer celebrated exclusively the gods, the heroes, and deeds mentioned in history, but they sang of friendship, pleasure, and love, with a sweetness and a harmony that our modern dry and harsh tongues can never equal.

The wines of Greece, which are still considered excellent, and ranging from the sweetest to the most heady, were examined and classified by *gourmets*. In certain repasts the entire scale was gone through, and, contrary to what occurs at the present day, the glasses increased in size in proportion as the wine poured out in them was better.

The prettiest women appeared to adorn these voluptuous assembles. Dances, games, and amusements of every kind prolonged the pleasures of the evening. They breathed sensuousness at every pore, and more than one Aristippus who arrived under the banner of Plato, retired as a follower of Epicurus.¹

¹ Plato, the greatest of Greek philosophers, represents here the highest

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Learned men vied with each other to write about an art that procured such sweet enjoyments; and, though Plato, Athenæus,¹ and many other authors, have preserved their names to us, those works are lost. Most of all, we regret a poem on "Gastronomy" of Archestrates,² a friend of one of the Pericles.

"This great writer," says Theotimus,³ "travelled through all lands and across all seas to learn for himself the best things they produced. During his travels he did not inquire into the manners of the peoples, since it is impossible to change them, but he entered into the laboratories where the delicacies of the table were prepared, and only held intercourse with those men who could advance the art he delighted in. His poem is a treasure of science, and does not contain a single line which is not a precept."

Such was the condition of cookery in Greece,⁴ and it

Truth and Morality; Epicurus, another Greek sage, is supposed to have taught his pupils that "happiness and enjoyment are the *summum bonum* of life"; Aristippus, a Greek philosopher of Cyrene, the father of "hedonism" (the pursuit of pleasure), was not a pupil of Plato, but of Socrates. — TR.

¹ Athenæus of Naucritis, in Egypt, flourished at the beginning of the third century. We have an abridgment of his *Banquet of the Sophists at Dinner*, full of anecdotes and everything relating to the social usages of the Greeks. — TR.

² Though nearly the whole of the works of Archestrates of Gela, a Greek poet who lived during the first half of the fourth century B.C., are lost, fragments of them have been published in 1823, in Palermo, by Dominico Scina, under the title *I Frammenti della Gastronomia di Arcestrate*. — TR.

³ Theotimus was a Stoic philosopher. — Athen. XIII. — TR.

⁴ The Marquis de Cussy, already mentioned in the Preface of M. Monselet, page 4, says in his *Art Culinaire*: "In spite of happy attempts, Athens never possessed the *grande cuisine*, and the reason of this is obvious — too much was sacrificed to sweet things, fruits, and flowers. Moreover, she never had bread of the finest flour such as Imperial Rome had, nor Italian spices, nor her appetising sauces, nor white Rhine wines." — TR.

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remained thus until a handful of men came to establish themselves on the banks of the Tiber, extended their sway over the neighbouring peoples, and finished by invading the world.

BANQUETS AMONG THE ROMANS

128. Good living was unknown to the Romans as long as they were only fighting to secure their independence, or to conquer their neighbours, as poor as themselves. Then their generals handled the plough, lived on vegetables, and so forth. Frugivorous historians never fail to praise these primitive times, when frugality was greatly honoured.

But when their conquests were extended to Africa, Sicily, and Greece, where they had feasted at the expense of the vanquished in those countries where civilisation was more advanced, they brought back to Rome the art of preparing some dishes that had pleased them abroad, and everything leads us to believe that they were well received.

The Romans sent a deputation to Athens to bring back a copy of the laws of Solon;¹ they went there also to study polite literature and philosophy. Whilst refining their manners, they learned the pleasures of the Athenian banquets; and cooks came to Rome as well as orators, philosophers, rhetoricians, and poets.

In time, as a result of the victories of Rome, all the wealth of the universe flowed into her treasury, and the luxury of the table was increased to a height almost incredible.

The Romans ate of everything, from the grasshopper to the ostrich, from the dormouse to the wild boar.²

¹ Solon, an Athenian lawgiver and philosopher, born about 640 B.C., was said to be a lineal descendant of Codrus, the last king of Athens, and is generally placed among the seven sages of Greece. — TR.

² This is one of the recipes of Apicius, the celebrated Roman *gourmand*: —

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Everything that could provoke the palate was attempted as seasoning, or used as a relish, and even some substances of which we cannot conceive the use, such as assafœtida, rue, and so forth.

The known universe was laid under contribution by armies and travellers, and they brought from Africa guinea-fowl and truffles, rabbits from Spain, pheasants from Greece, where they had been imported from the banks of the Phasis, and peacocks from the far ends of Asia.

The most important men among the Romans prided

GLIRES FARSI. — *Glires isicio porcino, item pulpis ex omni glirium membro tritis, cum pipere, nucleis, lasere, liquamine, farcies glires, et sutos in tegula positos, mittes in furnum, aut farsos in clibano coques*, which reads in English thus: STUFFED DORMICE. — Take dormice in pork fat, with bits of meat taken from every limb of the dormouse and pounded: stuff with pepper, kernels, assafœtida, sauce; place them in tiled receptacles, put them in a warm place, or cook them in an oven.

Dormice were considered a delicate dish; scales were sometimes placed on the table to verify their weight. The following epigram of Martial on the subject of dormice has come down to us: —

*Tota mihi dormitur hyems, et pinguior illi
Tempore sum quo me nil nisi somnus alit.*

Or in English: — I sleep all the winter, and become fatter during that time in which nothing but sleep finds me.

Dr. Lister, fond of good living, and physician to Queen Anne, who also liked to eat and drink well, speaking of the advantages in cookery of the use of scales, remarks, "that if twelve larks do not weigh twelve ounces, they are scarcely eatable; that they are passable if they weigh twelve ounces; but that if they weigh thirteen ounces, they may be considered plump and excellent." — BRILLAT-SAVARIN.

Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson, in his *A Book about the Table*, vol. II, ch. XIV, "On Epicures," says: "One of the unfeminine propensities attributed to Queen Anne by scandalous gossip is commemorated in the saying which, with piquant reference to the position of her statue before St. Paul's Cathedral, likens the habitual tippler to Queen Anne, 'who turns her back on the church, and looks towards the wine-shop.' Champagne was the favourite wine in which her Majesty is said to have indulged with habitual freedom. In justice, however, to this queen of proverbial deadness, it should be observed that the impeachment of her sobriety is sustained by no conclusive evidence." — TR.

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themselves on having beautiful gardens, where they cultivated not only fruits already known a long time, such as pears, apples, figs, grapes, but also those which were brought from different countries, such as the apricot from Armenia; the peach from Persia; the quince from Sidon; the strawberry from the valleys of Mount Ida, and the cherry, the conquest of Lucullus, from the kingdom of Pontus. These importations, which, of course, took place under very different circumstances, prove at least that the impulse was a general one, and that every one made it his glory, and considered it his duty to contribute to the enjoyments of the sovereign people.

Amongst eatables, fish was an especial object of luxury. Certain kinds of fish were preferred to other kinds, or when they had been caught in certain waters. The fish of distant countries was brought in pots full of honey; and when some of these fishes were of more than ordinary size, they were sold at very high prices, for there was a feeling of rivalry among not a few of the buyers, some of whom were richer than kings.

On liquids great care and attention were also bestowed.

The wines of Greece, Sicily, and Italy, were especial favourites with the Romans; and as their price depended on the district, or on the year in which they were grown, a sort of record of birth was inscribed on each amphora.

O nata mecum consule Manlio. — HORACE.¹

This was not all; as a result of that instinct for improvement we have already indicated, more piquancy and more flavour was attempted to be given to wine; and they infused flowers, spices, and various drugs into it, so that such preparations which contemporary authors have transmitted

¹ Ode 3, 21, 1.

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to us under the name of *condita*, must have burnt the mouth, and violently irritated the stomach.

Already at that time, the Romans had thoughts of alcohol, though it was only discovered fifteen centuries later.

But it is above all in the accessories of the banquet that this gigantic luxury was carried out with the greatest success.

All the furniture necessary for such feasts was made with great care, of the choicest materials, and by first-rate workmen. The number of courses gradually increased to twenty, or even more, and at each fresh course everything was taken away that had been employed in the preceding course.

Slaves were especially appointed for each detail of the service, and such duties were minutely distinguished. The most precious perfumes scented the banqueting hall. A sort of heralds proclaimed the merit of dishes worthy of special attention; they announced the claim which they had to this kind of ovation; in short, nothing was omitted that might stimulate the appetite, sustain the guests' attention, or prolong their enjoyment.

This luxury had also its aberrations and its eccentricities. Such were those banquets where the fish and birds served were counted by thousands; and those dishes whose sole merit was their extravagant price, as a dish composed of the brains of five hundred ostriches, and another dish in which were seen the tongues of five thousand birds who had all been taught to say a few words.

From what precedes, it appears to us that we may easily account for the enormous sums which Lucullus spent on his table, and for the expensive banquets that were given

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in the hall of Apollo,¹ where it was a point of honour to exhaust all the means known of gratifying the sensual appetites of the guests.

RESURRECTION OF LUCULLUS

129. Those glorious days may yet come back again before our own eyes, and those marvels might be renewed, if we only had a Lucullus.

Let us suppose that some man, known to be powerfully rich, wished to celebrate an important political or financial event, and to give on this occasion a banquet worthy of being remembered, and without any regard to expense.

Let us suppose that he summons all the arts to adorn in its various parts the place where the feast will be held, and that the caterers be ordered to exhaust all the resources of science in providing everything of the best, as well as to produce the finest wines out of their cellars for the guests to drink.

That, whilst this stately dinner is given, two pieces be acted by the very best actors.

That, during the banquet, music be heard, performed by the most renowned vocal as well as instrumental artists.

That, as an interlude between dinner and coffee, a ballet be danced by the most graceful and prettiest dancers of the opera.

That the evening close with a ball given to two hundred ladies selected among the most beautiful, and four hundred gentlemen-dancers chosen among the most elegant.

¹ Lucullus (B.C. 110-57) was a wealthy Roman general, noted for his banquets and his gastronomic indulgence, for, sometimes above seventeen hundred pounds were expended in a single meal. In his palace there were several halls named after the gods. — TR.

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That the buffet be constantly supplied with the best drinks, hot, cold, or iced.

That about midnight be served up an artistic supper, to impart to all new activity.

That the attendants be handsome and well dressed, the lighting of the rooms perfect; and, to forget nothing, that the host should have arranged for everybody to be fetched before the entertainment, and to be driven home again comfortably when it was finished.

All persons who know Paris will agree with me that such a banquet, well conceived, properly organised, well looked after, and well conducted, would startle even the treasurer of Lucullus if he were looking over the next day's bills.

In showing what may be done at the present time, in imitation of the banquets of this magnificent Roman, I have also told the reader what used to be considered then necessary as accessories to a banquet where they always introduced actors, singers, mimes, contortionists, and everything that could contribute to increase the enjoyments of persons whose only object was to amuse themselves.

What has been done amongst the Athenians, then amongst the Romans, later on amongst ourselves during the Middle Ages, and finally in our own day, springs from the nature of man, who looks with impatience for the end of the career he has chosen, as well as from a certain uneasiness which torments him so long as the whole of his life that he can dispose of is not entirely occupied.

LECTISTERNIUM AND INCUBITATION

130. Like the Athenians, the Romans ate lying down; but they only adopted this habit in a somewhat roundabout way.

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At first they used couches for the sacred repasts offered to the gods; their first magistrates and chief men afterwards adopted this practice, and in a little time it became general, and was retained until the beginning of the fourth century of the Christian era.

These couches, which at first were only a sort of benches, stuffed with straw and covered with skins, soon shared in the luxury that invaded everything connected with feasting. They were made of the most precious woods, inlaid with ivory, gold, and sometimes precious stones; they had cushions of wonderful softness, whilst the carpets which covered them were adorned with magnificent embroideries.

People laid on the left side, supporting themselves on their elbows, and usually there were three persons on the same couch.

In my opinion this manner of reclining at table, which the Romans termed *lectisternium*, was not so commodious or comfortable as the one we have adopted, or rather taken up again.

From a physical point of view, the supporting with the elbows requires a certain display of strength, in order to keep one's balance; moreover, some pain must have been felt when the weight of one part of the body rested on the elbow-joint.

From a physiological aspect, there is also something to say about a reclining posture; swallowing takes place in a less natural manner; the foods have a greater difficulty in going down, and do not form so good a mass in the stomach.

The ingestion of liquids, or the action of drinking, was above all still more difficult; and it must have required special care to avoid spilling unseasonably wine from those large goblets which shone on the tables of great people. It

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is without doubt, during the *lectisternium* period that the proverb arose: "There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

It could not have been much easier to eat in a cleanly manner when lying down, especially when we consider that many of the guests wore long beards, and that the fingers, or at most the knife, was used to convey the food to the mouth, — for the use of the fork is modern, none having been found in the ruins of Herculaneum, though nevertheless a good many spoons were discovered there.

We also think that modesty was not always respected during such banquets, when people so frequently overstepped the limits of temperance, when men and women were reclining on the same couches, and when it was not rare to see some of the guests asleep.

*Nam pransus jaceo, et satur supinus
Pertundo tunicamque, palliumque.*

The first interference with this reclining posture at meals took place in the name of morality.

As soon as the Christian religion had escaped from the persecutions that made its cradle bloody, and had acquired some influence, its ministers lifted up their voices against the excesses of intemperance.

They exclaimed against the length of meals, where all their precepts were violated, and the guests surrounded by every pleasure. Having adopted by choice an austere diet, they considered *gourmandise* one of the capital sins, bitterly criticised the promiscuity of sexes, and above all, attacked the habit of eating on couches, a habit which appeared to them the result of a culpable effeminacy, and the principal cause of the abuses they deplored.

People listened to these outspoken threats; and couches

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ceased to adorn the festive halls; they reverted to the ancient custom of eating in a sitting posture, and by a rare good luck, such a reform required by morality has not been detrimental to enjoyment.

POETRY

131. During the period we have been describing convivial poetry underwent a new modification, and took in the verses of Horace, Tibullus, and other nearly contemporary authors, a languor and an effeminacy unknown to the Greek muses.

*Dulce ridentem Lalagem amabo
Dulce loquentem.*¹

*Quæris quot mihi basiationes
Tuæ, Lesbia, sint satis superque.*²

*Pande, puella, pande capillulos
Flavos, lucentes ut aurum nilidum,
Pande, puella, collum candidum
Productum bene candidis humeris.*³

INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS

132. The five or six centuries which we have just reviewed in the small number of preceding pages, form the golden age of the culinary art, as well as for those persons who loved and cultivated it; but the arrival, or rather, the invasion, of the northern races changed everything, upset

¹ I will love sweet Lalage, smiling and talking. HORACE, Ode I, 22, 23. — TR.

² You ask, O Lesbia, how many kisses will be enough and to spare. CATULLUS, Carmen VII. — TR.

³ Spread out, O girl, spread out your yellow hair, as bright as polished gold; spread out, O girl, your white neck well raised up from white shoulders.

These verses are attributed by our author to Gallus, but this can only be conjecturally, as he left none. — TR.

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everything, and those days of glory were followed by a prolonged and terrible darkness.

At the appearance of these strangers, the alimentary art disappeared with the other sciences, of which it is the companion and the consoler. Most of the cooks were massacred in the palaces to which they belonged; others took flight rather than regale the oppressors of their country, and the small number who came to offer their services were affronted by being refused. Those savage mouths, and those hot throats, were insensible to the delights of refined cheer. Enormous quantities of meat and venison, and an unlimited amount of the strongest liquors, were sufficient to make those barbarians happy; and as the usurpers were always armed, the majority of those banquets degenerated into orgies, and in the banquetting hall often blood was spilled.

Nevertheless, it is in the nature of things that that which is excessive does not last long. The conquerors grew at last tired of being cruel; they allied themselves to the vanquished, took a veneer of civilisation, and commenced to become acquainted with the gentleness of social life.

Meals were affected by this improvement. A man invited his friends, less to fill their stomachs than to entertain them; the guests saw that some efforts were made to please them; they behaved, in their turn, more decently, though they enjoyed themselves, and the duties of hospitality became more affectionate.

These ameliorations, which took place towards the fifth century of our era, became more distinct under Charlemagne,¹ whose Capitularies prove that this great king personally interested himself to let his domains furnish forth some of the luxuries of his table.

¹ 742-814.

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Under this prince, and under his successors, such feasts assumed a gallant and chivalrous aspect; ladies came to embellish the court; they distributed the rewards of valour; and one might then see on the tables of princes, a pheasant with gilded claws, and a peacock with expanded tail, brought in by pages covered with gold, and beautiful maidens, whose innocence did not exclude the desire to please.

Observe that it was for the third time that women, shut up by the Greeks, the Romans, and the Franks, were called upon to adorn those banquets. The Turks alone are opposed to this appeal; but dreadful tempests threaten this unsocial people, and ere thirty years have rolled on, the powerful voice of the cannon will have proclaimed the general emancipation of the Odalisks.¹

The movement, once inaugurated, has been transmitted to us, and has greatly progressed by the impulse given to it by succeeding generations.

Women, even those of the most aristocratic rank, occupied themselves in their own houses with the preparation of food, on which they looked as part of the duties of hospitality, and which continued in France even as late as the end of the seventeenth century.

Under their fair hands some kinds of food underwent sometimes strange disguises; now and then an eel had a tongue like a serpent; a hare, the ears of a cat, and other comicalities. They made great use of the spices which the Venetians commenced to bring from the East, as well as of the scented waters supplied by the Arabs, so that fish was

¹ Our author wrote this in 1825, and though the "general emancipation of the Odalisks" has not yet taken place, "dreadful tempests" still threaten the Turks, and they have heard the "powerful voice of the cannon about the time he predicted." — TR.

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sometimes cooked in rose-water. The luxury of the table consisted above all in an abundance of dishes, and things went so far that the French kings thought themselves obliged to put a stop to this, and published some sumptuary laws, which had the same fate as those of the Greek and Roman legislators; they were made fun of, eluded, forgotten, and they now are only mentioned in books as historical curiosities.

People continued, therefore, to eat and drink well as long as they could, and especially in abbeys, convents, and other religious houses, because the wealth of such establishments was less exposed to the chances and dangers of the civil wars, which for so long a time desolated France.

Being thoroughly certain that the French ladies took always more or less an interest in what was going on in their kitchens, we may safely conclude that to their intervention is due that indisputable pre-eminence French cookery has always enjoyed in Europe, and which it has principally acquired by an immense quantity of delicate, light, and tasty preparations, of which women alone could have conceived the idea.

I have said that people enjoyed good eating and drinking "as long as they could," but they could not do so always. The suppers of our kings themselves were often abandoned to chance, and they were not always sure of them even. During the civil dissensions, Henri IV¹ would, one evening, have made a very poor repast, if he had not had the good sense to admit to his table a citizen who owned the only turkey in a town where the king had to pass the night.

However, gastronomic science advanced gradually; the Crusaders gave her the shallot, plucked from the plains of

¹ 1553-1610.

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Ascalon; parsley was imported from Italy, and long before Louis IX,¹ the pork-butchers and sausage-makers had based on the manipulation of pork the expectation of making a fortune, of which we, even in our own time, have witnessed some remarkable examples.

Pastry-cooks were not less successful, and the products of their industry held an honourable place at every feast. Even before the reign of Charles IX,² they formed a considerable corporation, and this prince gave them a charter whereby they had the privilege of making bread to be used at mass.

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, the Dutch brought coffee into Europe.³ Soliman Aga, the Turkish ambassador at the Court of France, on whom our great-great-grandmothers doted, made them take their first cups in 1669. An Armenian sold it publicly at the fair of Saint-Germain in 1672, and the first Parisian café was in the street St. André-des-Arts, and was adorned with mirrors and marble tables, almost like those of our own.

Then, also, sugar made its appearance,⁴ and Scarron,⁵ complaining that his sister had, from avarice, ordered the holes of her sugar-sifter to be made smaller, at least tells

¹ 1215-70.

² 1550-74.

³ Amongst Europeans, the Dutch were the first to import coffee plants from Arabia, which they introduced into Batavia, and afterwards brought into Europe.

M. de Reissout, lieutenant-general of artillery, sent for a cutting from Amsterdam, and made a present of it to the King's Botanical Garden. It was the first ever seen in Paris. This tree, of which M. de Jussieu has given a description, was, in 1813, one inch in diameter, and five feet high. The fruit is very pretty, and slightly resembles a cherry.

⁴ Whatever Lucanus may say, the ancients did not know sugar; for it is a product of art, and without crystallisation cane-sugar has only a mawkish and useless taste.

⁵ 1610-60.

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us that in his time such a household article was not uncommon.

It is again during the seventeenth century that brandy began to be used. Distillation, of which the first idea had been introduced by the Crusaders, up to that time remained a secret only known to a small number of adepts. About the commencement of the reign of Louis XIV,¹ stills were no longer very rare; but it was only in the reign of Louis XV that it was habitually drunk by the people, and not until the last few years has alcohol been obtained in one distillation by slow and gradual steps.

About the same time people began also to use tobacco; so that those four objects so important to commerce and the revenue, namely: sugar, coffee, brandy, and tobacco, are scarcely two centuries old.

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV AND LOUIS XV ²

133. It was under such auspices that the age of Louis XIV began, and under this brilliant reign the science of banqueting obeyed that progressive impulse which made all other sciences advance.

People have not altogether lost the memory of those festivals which all Europe went to see, nor of those tournaments where shone, for the last time, the lances that the bayonet has so well replaced, and those knightly suits of armour, a feeble protection against the brutality of cannon.

All these festivals ended with sumptuous banquets as their crowning part, for man is so constituted that he cannot be perfectly happy unless his taste is wholly gratified. This imperious desire has swayed grammar, so that when

¹ 1638-1715.

² 1710-74.

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we wish to express that a thing has been done “in perfection,” we say that it has been done “in very good taste.”

As a necessary consequence, those men who invented and arranged such festivals became of great importance, and this not without reason; for they had to combine various qualities, that is to say, a genius for inventing, a knowledge of arrangement, a sound judgment for proportions, great skill for discovering things, firmness to enforce obedience, and punctuality to make no one wait.

On such important occasions magnificent table decorations, or *surtouts*, were displayed for the first time; and a new art was created which, with painting and sculpture, presented to the eye an agreeable spectacle, and sometimes a sight appropriate to the circumstances or to the hero in whose honour the festival was given.

This was the grand and even gigantic era of the culinary art; but soon meetings where there were fewer guests, and dinners where dishes were very delicate, required a more careful attention and greater care.

It was at the *petit couvert*,¹ in the room of the favourites, and at the nice suppers of the courtiers and the financiers, that the science of culinary artists began to be admired; and, animated by a laudable ambition, they endeavoured to surpass each other.

Towards the end of this reign, the name of any famous cook was almost always written on the *menu* besides that of his patron,² and the latter was proud of it. Both their

¹ The “*petit couvert*” was the name given to the dinner of the French king or the princes when amongst intimates; but it was called the “*grand couvert*” when it was a ceremonious banquet. — TR.

² At some of the imperial, royal, and princely tables of Russia and Germany, it is even at the present time the custom to print on the *menu* the name of the culinary artist who has prepared some special dish. — TR.

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merits were combined, and some of the most illustrious names were found in the cookery-books, side by side with the dishes which they had patronised, invented, or given to the world.¹

Such a combination has ceased in our days. We are as fond of good living as our ancestors, and perhaps more so, but we interest ourselves much less about what is going on below stairs. A nod is perhaps the sole tribute of admiration that we pay to the artiste who pleases us; and the restaurant keepers — that is to say, the cooks of the public — are the only ones whom we verbally praise, which places them quickly amongst great capitalists. *Utile dulci*.

It was for Louis XIV that the *épine d'été*, “the good pear,” as he called it, was brought from the Levant, and it is because he was so weak in his old age that liqueurs were invented.²

This prince suffered sometimes from weakness and from that difficulty of living, which often appears after the age of sixty; some drinks were concocted from brandy and

¹ Among those illustrious names are: Louis de Béchameil, Marquis de Nointel; the Bailli de Souvré, grand Prieur de France; the Marshal de Soubise; the Duke de Richelieu; Madame de Maintenon; the Prince de Conti; the Duke of Orléans, Regent of France; Louis XV; the Count de Nesselrode; Stanislas Leckzinski and his daughter, the wife of Louis XV. Let me also quote the following dishes: the *filets de lapereau à la Berry*, invented by the Duchess of Berry, the daughter of the Duke of Orléans; the *filet de volaille à la Bellevue*, by the Marchioness of Pompadour; the *vol au vent à la Nesle*, by the Marquis of Nesle; the *chartreuse* (a vegetable salad, not the liqueur) of the Marchioness of Mauconseil; the fowls *à la Villeroy*, after the Duchess of Villeroy; the quails *à la Mirepoix*, after the Marshal's wife of that name; the sweetbreads *à la d'Artois*, invented by the Count d'Artois, afterwards Charles X; and the *potage à la Xavier*, a creation of the Count of Provence. — TR.

² This is not quite correct. The art of making liqueurs was brought from Italy into France during the reign of Henry II (1519-59). See also Meditation VI, the chapter on the “Various Uses of Sugar,” p. 83. — TR.

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sugar, combined with odours; and these were called, according to the custom of the time, "cordials."

Such is the origin of the art of the modern liqueur-manufacturers.

It is remarkable that about the same time the culinary art flourished at the English court. Queen Anne was very fond of good eating and drinking, and did not disdain to consult her cook. English cookery-books still contain receipts for some dishes which are called "after Queen Anne's fashion."¹

Gastronomic science which remained stationary during the sway of Madame de Maintenon,² continued its upward march under the Regency.

The Duke of Orléans,³ a clever prince, who was worthy to have friends, treated them to banquets as artistic as refined. On the best authority I have been told that on his table was deserving of notice *piqués* of extreme delicacy, *matelotes* as appetising as by the banks of the river, and turkeys superbly truffled.

Those truffled turkeys, of which the reputation and the price are still increasing, appear like beneficent stars, and make the eyes sparkle of all sorts of *gourmands* of every category, whilst their faces beam with delight, and they themselves dance with pleasure.⁴

The reign of Louis XV was not less favourable to the culinary art. Eighteen years of peace cured without much difficulty all the wounds made by more than sixty years of war; the wealth created by industry and distributed by

¹ See Meditation XXVII, p. 270, last note. — TR. ² 1635–1719.

³ The Duke of Orléans (1674–1723) was Regent during the minority of Louis XV, from 1716 until 1723. — TR.

⁴ The original has *tripudier*, a word not found in any French dictionary, from the Latin *tripudiare*. — TR.

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commerce, or acquired by financiers, made disappear certain inequalities of fortunes, and a spirit of conviviality spread through all classes of society.

It is from that time,¹ and generally during all repasts, that was observed more order, cleanliness, elegance, and those various refinements, which having gone on increasing until within our days, now threaten to outstrip all limits, and to lead us to ridiculous excesses.

In this reign again, the cooks were required to show their utmost skill in the *petites maisons*, or private establishments for the reception of ladies and gentlemen who were not "too particular," and for kept mistresses, and this turned to the advantage of gastronomy.

It is very easy to entertain a numerous company, with healthy appetites; with butcher's meat, game, venison, and goodly sized fish, a banquet for sixty people is soon got ready.

But to gratify mouths that only open to simper, to tempt fanciful and nervous women, to excite stomachs of "*papier mâché*," and rouse gawky, wretched-looking peo-

¹ According to information I have received from the inhabitants of many departments, a dinner for ten persons, in the year 1740, was composed of the following dishes: —

First Course.	<i>Bouilli.</i> An <i>entrée</i> of veal done in its own gravy. An <i>hors-d'œuvre</i>.
Second Course.	A turkey. A dish of vegetables. A salad. Sometimes cream.
Dessert.	Cheese. Fruits. Preserves.

The plates were only changed thrice; namely, after the soup, at the second course, and at dessert.

Coffee was very rarely served, but very often cherry brandy or pink-liqueur, which were then only known for a little time.

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ple, whose appetite is merely a whim always ready to drop, requires more genius, more penetration, and more labour than to resolve one of the most difficult problems of the Geometry of the Infinite.

LOUIS XVI ¹

134. Finally arrived at the reign of Louis XVI and at the first Revolution, we will not treat minutely all the various changes which we have witnessed; we will only content ourselves with indicating in broad outlines the various improvements that have taken place in the gastronomic science since 1774.

The natural part of gastronomy, as well as the manners and social institutions connected with it, have above all been ameliorated; and, although these things act on one another with continual reciprocity, we have thought, for the sake of greater clearness to treat them separately.

AMELIORATIONS IN RELATION TO ART

135. All professions relating to the preparation or the sale of foods, such as cooks, restaurant-keepers, pastry-cooks, confectioners, Italian warehouses, and so forth, have increased in ever greater proportions; and the proof that this increase has only taken place in accordance with the actual demand, is that the larger number has not interfered with their prosperity.

Physics and chemistry have been called to the assistance of the culinary art; the most distinguished men of science have not considered it beneath them to occupy themselves with our first wants, and they have improved the simple *pot-au-feu* of the workman, as well as those extractive

¹ 1754-93. Louis XVI came to the throne in 1774. — Tr.

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and transparent meats which are only served in gold or crystal.

New professions have sprung up, such as *pâtissiers de petit four*, which are a shade between the pastry-cooks properly so-called and confectioners. To their domain belong all those preparations in which butter is combined with sugar, eggs and flour, such as biscuits, macaroons, some sorts of cakes, *mêringues*, and other similiar delicacies.

The art of preserving foods has also become a separate profession, of which the object is to present us all the year round with the various substances peculiar to each season.

Horticulture has made immense progress; hot-houses have put before us the fruits of the tropics; different kinds of vegetables are produced by culture or importation, and amongst others the cantaloup melon, which only produces good fruit, and thus daily contradicts the proverb.¹

We have cultivated, imported, and presented, in regular order, the wines of all countries: Madeira, to open the trenches, French wines during dinner, and those of Spain and of Africa to crown the feast.

French cookery has adopted dishes of foreign origin, such as curry and beefsteak, a delicacy like caviare, a sauce like soy, beverages like punch, negus, and others.

Coffee has become popular: in the morning it is consid-

¹ Il faut en essayer cinquante,
Avant que d'en trouver un bon.
Fifty at least you 'll have to try,
Before you 'll find one fit to buy.

The whole distich in French is, however:

Les vrais amis sont comme les melons,
A peine parmi cinquante en trouve-t-on un de bon.

It appears according to Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria*, that melons, such as we cultivate, were not known to the Romans. What they termed *melo* and *pepo* were merely cucumbers, which they ate with very hot sauces.

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ered nourishing; and after dinner it is taken as an exhilarating and tonic beverage.

We have invented a great variety of cups, vases, and other accessories, which give to a banquet a more or less distinct, luxurious, and festive appearance; so that strangers who come to Paris find many objects on the table unknown to them by name, and of which often they do not like to ask the use.

From all these facts, it may be generally concluded that at the moment I write these lines, everything preceding, accompanying, or following a banquet, is treated and arranged with an order and a method which shows a praiseworthy desire to please the guests.

FINAL IMPROVEMENTS

136. We have revived from the Greek the word “gastromony”; it sounds pleasant to our ears, and though scarcely understood, we have only to pronounce it to make every one’s face beam with hilarity.

We have commenced by making a distinction between *gourmandise*, voracity, and gluttony; the first is now looked upon as a liking which need not be disguised, as a social quality, agreeable to the host, profitable to the guest, advantageous to science, and *gourmands* now rank with all other amateurs who are known to have any kind of hobby.

A general spirit of conviviality is to be found among all classes of society; banquets have increased in number, and every one, when treating his friends, endeavours to offer them some special dish he has seen on the best tables of the upper classes.

On account of the pleasure found in being together, people have adopted a better division of labour; they devote to

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business the hours from the beginning of the day till dark, and give themselves then up to the pleasures which accompany and follow banquets.

Luncheons, or so-called *déjeûners à la fourchette*, are given, which have a particular character on account of the dishes brought up, the gaiety which reigns, and the morning dress allowed on such occasions.

Teas are given, a sort of very extraordinary meal, as it is offered to persons who, having already well dined, feel neither hungry nor thirsty; its only object is amusement; its foundation, a liking for dainties and tit-bits.

Political banquets have been created, which have constantly been given during the last thirty years, and every time when it has been thought necessary to bring some influence directly to bear on a great number of people. Such banquets require an abundance of good cheer, to which not much attention is paid by the guests, whilst real enjoyment is almost wholly absent.

At last the restaurants appeared; — an entirely new institution, by no means studied sufficiently, and in which any one who has some money in his pocket can immediately, infallibly, and without any other trouble than that of wishing for it, obtain all the positive pleasures of which the organ of taste is susceptible.

MEDITATION XXVIII

OF PARISIAN RESTAURANTS AND THEIR KEEPERS

137. A RESTAURANT-KEEPER is a man whose business consists in offering to the public a banquet always ready, and of which the viands are sold in portions at fixed prices, at the request of the consumers.

Such an establishment is called a "restaurant," and he who manages it is in French a *restaurateur*. We give the name of *carte* to the list of the dishes, with their respective prices affixed, and of *carte à payer* to what we have to pay for what we have eaten.¹

Among those who crowd to restaurants, there are few who imagine that the first man who opened such an establishment must have been a man of genius and a profound observer.

We will assist laziness, and endeavour to find out what led to the opening of the first of such establishments, now so common and so convenient.

THE RESTAURANT

138. Towards the year 1770, after the glorious days of Louis XIV, the orgies of the Regency, and the long tranquillity under the Ministry of Cardinal Fleury,² strangers

¹ "We have changed all that," to use a Gallic idiom. The word *restaurant* still exists, but *restaurateur* is hardly ever used, and it is now called the *propriétaire de l'établissement*. We also ask now for the *addition*, a barbarism which has replaced the old-fashioned *carte à payer*; the word *carte* still lingers on. — Tr.

² 1653–1743.

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in Paris found but few resources with regard to good cheer.

They were compelled to have recourse to the cookery of the *traiteurs*, or eating-houses, which was generally bad. Several hotels existed where *tables d'hôte* were held; but with very few exceptions they only gave what was absolutely necessary for keeping body and soul together, and served up their meals at a certain hour.

People could indeed go to *traiteurs*; but they did not sell portions, and any one wishing to entertain a few friends was obliged to order his dinner beforehand; so that those persons who had not the good fortune of being invited to any rich man's house, left the great city without having acquired a knowledge of the resources and the pleasures of the Parisian culinary art.

An order of things which injured every day such interests could not continue, and already some thinkers dreamt of an improvement.

At last a man of thought was found who judged that so active a cause could not remain without effect; that the same want being reproduced every day, about the same time, consumers would flock in crowds to any place where they were certain that this want would be agreeably satisfied; that if the wing of a fowl were cut off for the first comer, a second would be sure to present himself who would be satisfied with the leg; that the taking of a first slice in the obscurity of the kitchen would not disgrace the remainder of the joint; that no man objects to a slight increase in the charges, when a good dinner has been promptly and cleanly served; that amongst so many necessary details it would be endless if the guests were to discuss the price or the quality of the dishes ordered; and, besides, that the

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variety of dishes, combined with the fixity of prices, has the advantage of suiting all purses.

That man thought of many other things, easy to divine. He was the first restaurant-keeper, and created a profession that is sure of bringing a fortune to any man whenever he will practise it honestly, orderly, and skilfully.

ADVANTAGES OF RESTAURANTS

139. The use of restaurants, which from France has made the tour of Europe, is of great advantage to all men, and of great importance to science.

1. Any man may dine there at any hour he likes, according to the demands of business or pleasure.

2. He is certain not to exceed the sum which he has to spend on his meal, for he knows beforehand the price of each dish served up.

3. According to the length of his purse, he can, if so inclined, make a substantial, refined, or dainty meal, wash it down with the best French or foreign wines, aromatise it with Mocha, or perfume with the liqueurs of the Old and New World,¹ without any other restriction than the vigour of his appetite, or the capacity of his stomach. The dining-room of a restaurant in Paris is the paradise of *gourmands*.

4. A restaurant is also very convenient for travellers, strangers, and for those men whose family resides for some time in the country, as well as for all those, in one word, who can have no cookery done at home, or who for the moment have to do without it.

Before the year 1770, the time of which we have spoken,

¹ The liqueurs of the New World, of which the French are very fond even now, are Jamaica rum; *liqueur des Îles*, or *liqueur de la Martinique*, sometimes called, after its manufacturer, *liqueur de Made Amphouz*; and Curaçao, which is distilled at Amsterdam. — Tr.

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wealthy and influential men enjoyed almost exclusively two great advantages: they travelled with rapidity, and always feasted on good cheer.

The establishment of new carriages, which travel fifty leagues in twenty-four hours,¹ has done away with the first privilege; the establishment of restaurants has destroyed the second; and thus the best cheer is within the reach of the whole nation.

Any man who has fifteen or twenty francs in his pocket, and who sits down at the table of a first-class restaurant, is as well, and even better, served than at the table of a prince, for the banquet offered to him is just as splendid; moreover, he is not worried by any personal considerations, as he can order whatever dishes he likes.²

A GLANCE ROUND A DINING-ROOM IN PARIS

140. A public dining-room, examined with a little care, presents to the inquiring eye of a philosopher a picture worthy of his interest, through the variety of situations it brings together.

The back-ground is occupied by a host of customers sitting by themselves, who give their orders in a loud voice, wait with impatience, eat hurriedly, pay, and go away.

In this room are also some families on their travels, who, satisfied with a frugal meal, nevertheless, give it a zest by ordering some dish unknown to them, and appear greatly to enjoy a spectacle entirely new to them.

Close by them is a Parisian married couple, as can be seen by the hat and shawl hung up over their heads. For

¹ This was published in 1826; such a speed would not be considered excessive in our days. — Tr.

² Compare this with what is said on page 297 about "Restaurants at fixed prices"; see also note, p. 298. — Tr.

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a long time they have had nothing to say to each other; they made up their minds to go to the theatre, and the odds are that one of them will fall asleep.

A little further are two lovers; it may be concluded that they are so, from the attentions of the one, the pretty ways of the other, and the *gourmandise* of both. Pleasure sparkles in their eyes; and from the choice which presides over the ordering of their meal, the present is sufficient to guess the past, and foresee the future.

In the centre is a table surrounded by regular customers, who generally pay less than strangers, and dine at a fixed price. They know all the waiters by name, who tell them in confidence what dishes are quite fresh and which are stale. These customers form the stock of the dining-room, and, as it were, a nucleus around which other groups gather; or rather, they are like the decoy ducks used in Brittany to lure wild ducks.

People are also to be found there whom everybody knows by sight, but whose name no one knows. They are at their ease, as if they were at home, and frequently try to enter into conversation with their neighbours. They belong to some of those people only to be met with in Paris; and who, having neither property, capital, nor industry, nevertheless, spend a good deal of money.

Finally, here and there may be seen some strangers, especially English, who stuff themselves with double portions of meat, order everything that is expensive, drink the most heady wines, and sometimes require assistance to leave the table.

The exactness of this picture can be verified any day, and if it stimulates our curiosity, it may perhaps cast a cloud upon our moral feelings.

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INCONVENIENCE OF RESTAURANTS

141. There is no doubt that the occasion and the attraction of the different objects to be found in a restaurant may lead many persons into spending a larger sum than they intended. Perhaps they have given indigestions to a few delicate stomachs, and been the cause of some unseasonable sacrifices on the altar of "Venus cloaca."

What is much more ominous for society is, that it is almost certain that eating alone engenders egotism, accustoms a person only to care for himself, isolates him from everything around him, and teaches him not to show any polite attentions. By such conduct before, during, and after the meal, it is easy to distinguish, in ordinary society, among the guests those who dine habitually at a restaurant.¹

COMPETITION

142. We have already stated that the establishment of restaurants was of great importance for the foundation of gastronomic science.

In fact, as soon as experience showed that a single dish, well cooked, was sufficient to make the fortune of the inventor, self-interest, acting as a powerful motive, kindled every imagination, and set all the cooks to work.

Analysis has discovered the esculent parts in substances, which up to the present time were reputed useless; new foods have been found; the old ones have been improved on; and both have been combined in a thousand different

¹ Let one example suffice: when a dish with a fowl, or anything cut up, is sent round, the men help themselves first, and then place the dish before them, without passing it to their neighbour, for whom they are not accustomed to care.

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manners. Foreign inventions have been imported; the entire universe has been laid under contribution, and it may be truly said that during some of our meals a complete course of food-geography might be held.

RESTAURANTS AT FIXED PRICES

143. Whilst gastronomy thus moved upwards, as well in discoveries as in expense — for new things have always to be paid for — the same motive, that is to say, the hope of gaining money, made it take an opposite direction, at least as regards expenses.

Some restaurant-keepers thought that by giving good meals at a moderate price they would attract men of moderate means, who are, of course, most numerous, and thus get a great many customers.

They endeavoured to find provisions of not too high a price, and which might be made agreeable by being well cooked.

In butcher's meat, which is always good in Paris, and in sea-fish, to be found there in abundance,¹ they had an unfailing resource, supplemented by vegetables and fruits, which now gardeners always sell cheap.

They calculated what was strictly necessary to fill a stomach of ordinary capacity, and to quench any thirst, other than a dog's.

They observed that many foods are only expensive when quite new, or when first in season; and that they could be offered a little later at a much cheaper rate; finally, they came gradually to such precision that, whilst gaining 25 or

¹ Sea-fish is not even now abundant in Paris, and cannot have been so in 1825, before railways were used! In justice to our author, however, let us state that the *Almanach des gourmands* for 1825 also speaks of the abundance of sea-fish in the French capital. — TR.

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30 per cent., they were able to give to their customers for two francs, or even less, a pretty good dinner, and with which any decent man ought to be satisfied; for it would cost at least a thousand francs a month to have in a private house a table as well provided for and with as much variety.¹

Restaurant-keepers, considered from this last point of view, have rendered an important service to that interesting part of the population of every large town, composed of strangers, military men, and clerks; and they have been led by their interest to solve a problem which seemed difficult, namely, to give people good cheer at a moderate price, and even very cheap.

Restaurant-keepers who have followed this system have not been less liberally rewarded than their brethren who catered for the upper classes. They have not suffered so many reverses as those who were on the top of the culinary ladder, and their fortune, although not made so quickly, was more certain; for if they made less money at once, they made it every day; and it is a mathematical truth that when an equal number of units has been collected in one point an equal total will be given, whether they are united by tens, or whether they are collected one by one.

Gastronomers have retained the names of many artists who shone in Paris since the adoption of restaurants, and amongst them we can name Beauvilliers, Méot, Robert, Rose, Legacque, the brothers Véry, Henneveu, and Baleine.

¹ A pretty good dinner is now not to be got for two francs in Paris, and a very ordinary dinner *à prix fixe* costs at least five francs. There are still around the Palais-royal restaurants which pretend to give a dinner for two francs and a half, but I should not advise anybody to try them. See also note, p. 310. — Tr.

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Some of the establishments owed their prosperity to special causes, as the *Veau qui tette* to sheep's trotters, the . . . to boiled tripe,¹ the *Frères Provençaux*, to cod, stewed with a slight flavour of garlic, Véry to truffled *entrées*, Robert to dinners ordered, Baleine to the care he always took to have good fish, and Henneveu to the mysterious boudoirs on his fourth story.

But of all the heroes of gastronomy, no one has a greater right to a biographical notice than Beauvilliers, who died about the year 1820.²

BEAUVILLIERS

144. Beauvilliers, established since 1782, has been for more than fifteen years the most famous *restaurateur* of Paris.³

To begin with: his rooms are elegant and his waiters are well-dressed; he has a good cellar and a first-rate *cuisine*, and when a few amongst those we have named attempted to vie with him, he fought the good fight without any disadvantage, for he had but a few steps to take to follow the progress of gastronomic science.

During the successive occupations of Paris in 1814 and 1815, carriages of all kinds and of every nation were con-

¹ "How say you to a fat tripe, finely broiled?" — Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, IV, 3. — TR.

² Not one of the celebrated restaurants mentioned by our author exists at the present moment, except the *Frères Provençaux*, but much shorn of its former greatness. The *brandade de morue*, still very good there, has too decided a taste of garlic to please English gastronomers. — TR.

³ Beauvilliers had been *chef* of the Count of Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII. At the date of the publication of the *Physiologie du Goût* (1826), his sons were established at No. 26 Rue de Richelieu, and, I suppose, in compliment to their English customers, called their restaurant *A la Grande Taverne de Londres*. — TR.

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stantly to be seen before his establishment; he knew all the principal officers of the different foreign troops of the army of occupation, and was at last able to address them in their own tongue, at least as much as was necessary for business transactions.

Beauvilliers published, towards the end of his life, a work in two octavo volumes, entitled *L'Art du Cuisinier*, the fruit of his long experience, which bears the stamp of a practical mind, and is still as much esteemed as on its first appearance. Until his book saw the light, gastronomic art had never been treated with such care and method; several editions have smoothed the way for works coming after it, but none of them is an improvement upon it.

Beauvilliers had a prodigious memory; he recognised and welcomed men who had only dined at his house once or twice, after not having seen them for twenty years. In certain cases his method was also peculiar to himself.

When he knew that a company of wealthy men dined in his rooms, he came up to them in a most polite manner, paid his respects to them, and appeared to devote quite special attention to his guests.

He pointed out a dish which might be passed over, another that should be taken without delay, ordered a third of which no one had thought, sent for wine from a cellar of which he alone kept the key, and all this in so pleasant and courteous a manner, that such orders seemed so many personal favours on his part. But Beauvilliers' appearance as host only lasted a moment; then he withdrew, and soon after the bloated bill and the bitterness of the *mauvais quart d'heure de Rabelais*¹ were sufficient proof that people had been dining at his establishment.

¹ Rabelais (1495-1553) was one day at a country inn, and had not

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Beauvilliers made, unmade, and remade his fortune many times. We do not know what was his pecuniary condition when death overtook him, but he had so many ways of spending money that we do not think his heirs were much enriched by what he left.

THE GASTRONOMER AT THE RESTAURANT

145. On examining the *menus* of various restaurants of the first class, and especially those of the brothers Véry and the *Frères Provençaux*, it will be seen that any one who goes to a good dining-room has at his disposal as elements of his dinner at least

12 soups.	12 of pastry.
24 side-dishes.	24 of fish.
15 to 20 <i>entrées</i> of beef.	15 roasts.
20 <i>entrées</i> of mutton.	50 <i>entremets</i> .
30 <i>entrées</i> of poultry and game.	50 <i>desserts</i> .
15 or 20 of veal.	

Moreover, the gastronome may wash down all these dishes with at least thirty kinds of wine, from Burgundy to Tokay or Constantia,¹ and twenty or thirty different sorts of liqueurs, without counting coffee, and such mixtures as punch, negus, syllabub,² and so forth.

Amongst the various parts that constitute the dinner of sufficient money to pay his bill. He made up three small packets of brick dust, on which he wrote "poison for the king," "poison for the king's brother," "poison for the king's son." His landlord informed against him, and he was removed to Paris, where he confessed that not being able to settle his score, he had adopted this way of being brought free of cost to the capital; hence the proverbial expression. — Tr.

¹ When our author wrote, the only Cape wine known in France was the excellent, though rather sweet and luscious, "Constantia"; the original has, however, *Vin du Cap*, which must not be mistaken for the ordinary "Cape sherry." — Tr.

² This English word has been adopted by Brillat-Savarin; it is not even in Littré's Dictionary. — Tr.

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a connoisseur, the principal ingredients come from France, such as butchers' meat, poultry, and fruits; others are in imitation of English ones, such as beefsteak, welsh-rabbit, punch, etc.; others come from Germany, as "sauerkraut," Hamburg beef, fillets from the Black Forest; others from Spain, as the olla podrida, garbanzos, Malaga raisins, peppered hams from Xerica, and liqueur-wines; others from Italy, as macaroni, Parmesan cheese, Bologna sausages, polenta, ices, liqueurs; some from Russia, as dried meats, smoked eels, caviare; some from Holland, as cod, cheese, pickled herrings, curaçao, and anisette; some from Asia, as Indian rice, sago, curry, soy, Shiraz wine, and coffee; some from Africa, as Constantia; some from America, as sweet potatoes, pine apples, chocolate, vanilla, sugar, and so forth, which furnishes sufficient proof of the truth of what we have stated in another part of this book, namely, that a dinner, such as can be had in Paris, is thoroughly cosmopolitan, to which every quarter of the globe furnishes some of its products.

MEDITATION XXIX

CLASSICAL GOURMANDISE PUT INTO PRACTICE

HISTORY OF M. DE BOROSE

146. M. DE BOROSE was born about 1780. His father was secretary to the king; he lost his parents when quite young, and then found himself possessor of an income of forty thousand francs, which was at that time a very handsome fortune; but which now is only just sufficient not to die of starvation.

A paternal uncle took care of his education. He learnt Latin, but was surprised that a man who can express everything in French should give himself so much trouble in learning to say the same things in another language. Nevertheless, he made some progress, and after having read Horace, became converted, took a great pleasure in meditating on ideas clothed in such elegant words, and did his utmost well to understand the language in which that intelligent poet had written.

He also learnt music, and, after many trials with other instruments, only played the piano. He did not throw himself into the endless difficulties of that musical instrument,¹ but he used it as it ought to be used, and was satisfied when he knew enough to accompany a song.

As he did not push himself forward, nor move his arms

¹ The piano should facilitate the composition of music, and serve as an accompaniment to the voice. Played alone it has neither warmth nor expression. The Spaniards call *bordonear* the humming sound produced by stringed instruments.

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about, nor turn up his eyes,¹ he was even preferred to professional musicians, the more so as he tried conscientiously to sustain the voice of the lady who sang, so that she could show her talent to advantage, which every accompanist ought to do.

Protected by his age, he traversed without accident the most terrible times of the Revolution; but he was called upon to serve in the army, and paid for a man who went bravely in his place to be killed for him. Provided with the legal proof of the death of his *alter ego*,² he found himself in a good position to celebrate our triumphs, and to bewail our reverses.

M. de Borose was of middling height, but was perfectly well made. As for his face, it indicated his fondness for good living; and we shall give an idea of it, by saying that if he had been in the same room with Gavaudan of the Théâtre des Variétés, Michot of the Théâtre Français, and the song-writer Désaugiers, every one would have thought they were members of one and the same family.³ On the

¹ French musical technical slang: *faire les bras*, is to raise the elbow and the upper part of the arm, as if one's feelings overcame one; *faire les yeux*, is to turn the eyes towards heaven, as if one was going to faint; *faire des brioches*, is to miss a single stroke or an intonation. (BRILLAT-SAVARIN.) A *brioche*, is a cake, and the term *faire une brioche*, according to Lorédan Larchey's *Dictionnaire de l'Argot parisien*, is now applied to any blunder, and owes its origin to the cakes bought in former times by the musicians of the opera, with the fines levied on their comrades who played out of tune. — TR.

² The original has "Sosie," the slave of Amphitryon, in Molière's play of that name, in which Mercury assumes the form of Sosia, and Jupiter that of Amphitryon; and the mistakes and confusion which consequently arise, resemble those of the brothers Antipholus and their servants the brothers Dromio in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. — TR.

³ Jean Baptiste Sauveur Gavaudan (1772-1840) was a well-known Parisian actor and singer, and Antoine Michot (1759-1830), in his time an actor of some repute. Marie Antoine Madeleine Désaugiers (1772-1827), one of the best known song-writers and dramatic authors of

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whole, it was generally admitted he was a fine-looking fellow, and sometimes he had some reasons to think himself so.

To select a profession was for him an affair of importance. He tried many; but he found them always more or less inconvenient, and thus remained without doing anything for a long time; in other words, he was admitted into several literary societies, became a member on the Committee of his parish, subscribed to various philanthropical societies; and looked after his own money-matters, which he managed admirably, so that he had as much to do as any other man, and had his correspondence and his study.

When he was twenty-eight years old, he thought that it was time to get married; he only wished to see his intended at dinner, and after he had met her three times he was perfectly convinced that she was as intelligent as she was good and pretty.

The conjugal happiness of M. de Borose lasted but a short time; scarcely eighteen months after his marriage his wife died in childbed, leaving him to bewail for ever so short a happiness, and as a consolation a daughter, whom he named Herminie, and of whom we shall speak later on.

M. de Borose amused himself pretty well with various occupations he had undertaken. Nevertheless, he at last began to perceive that even the most select company was not without its pretensions, patronising airs, and sometimes a little jealousy. He knew that there exists no human being without faults, that no one is perfect; but went, nevertheless, a good deal in society, unconsciously followed the dictates of Fate, impressed on his countenance, and gradually found in gastronomy his principal enjoyment.

France, was also for many years manager of the Paris Vaudeville Theatre.
— Tr.

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M. de Borose used to say that gastronomy is nothing but reflection and appreciation combined, applied to a branch of science which ameliorates human beings.

He said, with Epicurus,¹ "Is man then made to despise the gifts of Nature? Does he only come into the world to gather bitter fruits? For whom are these flowers which the gods cause to grow at the feet of mortals? It is to obey the will of Providence that we abandon ourselves to our various innate inclinations; our duties spring from His laws, our ideas from His inspirations."

He used to say also with the stout professor, that good things are intended for good men;² otherwise we should fall into the absurdity of thinking that God had only created them for the wicked.

The first labour that M. de Borose undertook was a conversation with his cook, in which he intended to show him what were his duties considered in their true light.

He told him that an expert cook, who might be a scientific man in theory, was always one in practice; that by virtue of his office his place was between the chemist and the physician. He went even as far as to say that a cook, who had to keep the animal mechanism in good order, was above the druggist, whose use is only occasional.

He added, with a doctor as witty as learned,³ that "a cook should study the art of modifying foods by the action of fire, an art unknown to the ancients. This art requires, in our days, study and skilled combination. A man must

¹ Alibert (1766-1837), *Physiologie des Passions*, I.

² *Sébusien*, stout, in the original is a word invented by our author, probably from the Latin *sebosus*, and not to be found in any French dictionary. But was Professor Alibert abnormally stout? Was it not also Dr. Johnson who used to say, "Good things are not made for fools alone"? — TR.

³ Alibert, *Physiologie des Passions*, I.

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have investigated for a long time the productions of the globe to employ cleverly the seasonings and disguise the bitterness of certain meats, to render others more savoury, and to employ the best ingredients. A cook in Europe is pre-eminent in the art of arranging these marvellous combinations."

The allocution had its effect, and the *chef*,¹ penetrated with his importance, was never behind the dignity of his office.

A little time, experience, and reflection, soon taught M. de Borose that the number of dishes being almost determined by custom, a good dinner is not much dearer than a bad one; that it does not cost 500 francs a year more to drink always very good wine; and that everything depends on the will of the master, the order he keeps in his household, and the energy he imparts to all his servants.

Starting from those fundamental principles, the dinners of M. de Borose assumed a classical and solemn character; their reputation for refinement spread abroad; people were proud of having been invited by him, and many praised his dinners who had never been at his house.

He never invited those so-called gastronomers who are mere gluttons, whose belly is an abyss, and who eat everywhere, of anything, and everything. He found among his friends as many pleasant guests as he liked; they ate their dinner with a really philosophical attention, devoted to it all the time it requires, and never forgot that there is a

¹ In a well-appointed house, the cook is called *chef*. He has under him an assistant, for the *entrées*, a pastry-cook, a roast-cook, and scullions, — the pantry is a separate institution. The scullions are in the kitchen what the boys are on board ship; like them, they are often beaten, and also, like them, sometimes make their way.

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moment when reason says to appetite: *non procedes amplius*, you shall not go further.

It often happened that provision merchants brought him articles of the best quality, and that they preferred to sell them to him at a moderate price, because they were certain that these articles would be consumed calmly and thoughtfully, that they would be mentioned in society, and that the reputation of their shops would be proportionably increased.

The number of guests at the house of M. de Borose rarely exceeded nine, and the dishes were not very numerous; but the superintendence of the master, and his exquisite taste, rendered them perfect. On his table appeared always what was in season and what was best, either on account of its rarity, or on account of its being early; whilst the servants were as attentive as could be wished.

During the meal the conversation was always general, lively, and often instructive, which last quality was due to a very particular precaution that M. de Borose took.

Every week a scientific but not very rich man, to whom he paid a yearly allowance, came down from his garret and laid before him a series of topics proper to be discussed at table. The host took care to put them forward when the topics of the day began to be exhausted, and thus the conversation revived and shortened so much the more those political discussions which disturb ingestion as well as digestion.

Twice a week he invited ladies, taking care so to arrange matters that each of them should find among the guests a gentleman who would be exclusively attentive to her. This precaution made his society very agreeable, for even the

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most severe prude is humiliated when no notice is taken of her.

On those days alone, a quiet game of *écarté* was allowed; on other days, only piquet and whist were tolerated, for they are grave and thoughtful games, and denote in their players a careful education. But generally a pleasant conversation filled up the whole evening, interrupted now and then by a few songs, which M. de Borose accompanied on the piano with a talent we have already mentioned, and for which he received an ovation which he did not at all dislike.

On the first Monday of every month, the parish-priest came to dine with his parishioner, and was certain to be received with esteem and respect. On that day the conversation took a more serious tone, but it did not exclude harmless pleasantry. The venerable pastor never refused to come to those delightful meetings, and it is said that he sometimes wished that every month had four first Mondays. On the same day young Miss Herminie de Borose left the boarding-school of Madame Mignerou,¹ who usually accompanied her pupil. At each visit the young girl displayed some fresh charm; she adored her father, and when he imprinted a kiss on her brow, no human beings could be more happy than they were.

De Borose took care that the expenses of his table should always be profitable to morality.

He only dealt with those tradesmen who were known to him as being honourable and just in their dealings and moderate in their prices; he sang their praises, and helped them

¹ Our author bestows in a note great praise on the scholastic-establishment for young ladies of Madame Mignerou-Rémy, rue de Valois, faubourg du Roule, No. 4, which was "under the patronage of the Duchess of Orléans"; but the lady has probably been for a long time gathered to her fathers, and the school does not exist any more. — TR.

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if they needed it; for he also used to say that people who are in too great a hurry to make their fortune, are not over delicate in their way of making it. His wine-merchant became very soon wealthy, for it was said that he never adulterated what he sold — a virtue very rare even among the Athenians in the times of Pericles, and by no means common in the nineteenth century.

We believe that it was he who gave advice to Hurbain, a restaurant-keeper in the Palais Royal at Paris, where one could get for two francs a dinner which elsewhere would have cost more than double, and who is on a safe road to fortune, because his customers increase, attracted by his moderate prices.¹

The dishes from his table, which were not quite finished, were not left to the discretion of the servants, who were well paid; everything that looked well was sent away to the destitute.

Being a member of the Charity Committee, he came to know the wants and the morality of a great number of the poor, and was sure for his gifts to be well received; so that some food, still appetising, from time to time drove away hunger and gladdened the heart; such as part of a large pike, the back of a turkey, a piece of fillet, pastry, and so forth.

¹ Hurbain does not exist any more; let the lover of good cheer, who imagines that a decent dinner is still to be got in Paris for a moderate price, drop a tear to his memory! I do not know what the late M. Hurbain's dinners at two francs may have been; but I find in the *Nouvel Almanach des Gourmands*, published in Paris in 1825, one year before the *Physiologie du Goût* made its appearance, in an article *La Journée d'un Gourmand*, the following words: "In order to mortify myself, according to the precepts of our religion, I sometimes dine in a restaurant. The usual price of my dinner is 24 francs." Of course the editor is a *gourmand*, who has a yearly income of £800; but there is some difference between two francs and twenty-four. — TR.

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But to render his presents still more acceptable, he always took care to let people know what he was going to send them on a Monday morning, or after a public holiday, — thus preventing the necessity of not doing any work during holidays, and the inconvenience of keeping “St. Monday,”¹ and making of a love for nice things an antidote to debauchery.

When M. de Borose discovered some small tradesmen married and comfortably settled, and whose prudent conduct showed qualities on which the prosperity of nations is based, he went to pay them a visit, and considered it his duty to ask them to dine with him.

On the day appointed the young wife always met at M. de Borose’s house some ladies who spoke to her of the duties of a mistress of a house; whilst the husband met men who could talk about commerce and manufactures. Those invitations, of which the purpose was known, were finally considered as a distinction, and every one was eager to deserve them.

While all these things took place, the youthful Herminie grew and developed; and we owe to our readers a portrait of the daughter as an integral part of the biography of the father.

¹ Most workmen in Paris work on Sunday to finish what they have begun; then they take it back to their employer, receive their wages go away and amuse themselves for the rest of the day.

On Monday morning they meet in little parties, club together all the money that is still left, and do not leave each other until all is spent.

This state of things, which was strictly true ten years ago, has become a little improved, thanks to the attention paid by the masters of large workshops, and owing to the establishment of savings-banks; but the evil is yet very great, and a good deal of time and labour is wasted, which is spent in tea-gardens, with restaurant-keepers, in taverns, and public-houses in the suburbs and all round Paris.

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Miss Herminie de Borose is five feet one inch in height, and her figure combines the slender form of a nymph with the charms of a goddess.

The only fruit of a happy marriage, she enjoys perfect health, whilst her physical strength is great; she dreads neither heat nor sunshine, and is not afraid of long walks.

At a little distance she might be thought of dark complexion; but, on approaching her, we perceive that she has dark chestnut-coloured hair, that her eyebrows are black, and that her eyes are the colour of the sky.

Most of her features are classical, but the nose is French. This charming nose produces such a delightful impression, that a committee of artists sat during three dinners, and decided that this wholly French and typical nose is at least as worthy as any other to be immortalised by the pencil, the chisel, or the graver.

The foot of this beautiful girl is very small and well-shaped. The professor praised, and even flattered her so much, that in the year 1825 her father allowed her to make him a present of a pretty little satin shoe, which he shows to a select few, to prove that extreme sociability acts on shape as well as on persons; for the professor pretends that a little foot, such as is admired at the present time, is produced by care and culture, is almost never found among country people, and denotes nearly always a young lady whose ancestors have long been in comfortable circumstances.

When Herminie has stuck a comb in her hair and arrayed herself in a simple dress with a ribbon round her waist, everybody is delighted with her, and no one imagines that flowers, pearls, or diamonds could add any lustre to her beauty. Her conversation is simple and easy, and no one would think that she has read all our best authors; but

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occasionally she gets excited, and then her intelligent remarks betray her secret. As soon as she perceives this, she blushes, casts down her eyes, and her heightened colour proves her modesty.

Miss de Borose plays as well the piano as the harp; but she prefers the latter instrument, through some enthusiastic sentiment for the celestial harps on which the angels play, and for the golden harps celebrated by Ossian.

Her voice is sweet and of angelic perfection, which does not prevent her from being a little timid; nevertheless she sings without needing much persuasion; but when she begins, she never fails to cast upon her audience a bewitching glance, so that she might sing out of tune, as so many other young girls do, and no one would perceive it.

She does not neglect needlework, an innocent source of enjoyment, and a resource ever at hand against irksomeness; she sews like a fairy, and whenever some new fashion comes out, some forewoman of a well-known establishment generally comes and shows it to her. The heart of Herminie had not yet spoken, and filial love has up to the present time been sufficient for her happiness.

She is very fond of dancing, so that when she takes her place in a quadrille, she appears to be two inches taller, and one would think she was going to fly away; nevertheless, her steps are quiet and without pretension, and she contents herself with moving about lightly, like an amiable and pleasant young lady; but accidentally she betrays that she might dance better if she would, and then one suspects that Madame Montessu¹ would have had a rival.

“Even when the bird walks, we see that it has wings.”

That charming girl had left boarding-school, and lived

¹ A celebrated dancer of the time. — TR.

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happily with M. de Borose, who enjoyed a fortune well managed, was deservedly esteemed by every one, and imagined that he had yet a long career before him. But all hope is illusory, and none can answer for the future.

About the middle of last March, M. de Borose was invited to spend a day in the country with a few friends.

It was one of those days unseasonably warm, a forerunner of spring, and on the distant horizon some of those dull roars were heard, which have given rise to the proverbial saying, "Winter is breaking its neck," but which did not prevent M. de Borose and his friends from going out to take a walk.

Nevertheless, the sky soon looked threatening, the clouds gathered, and a frightful storm burst forth with thunder, rain, and hail.

Everybody ran for safety as they could, and where they could. M. de Borose sought shelter under a poplar, whose lower branches, bending towards the ground, seemed to offer some protection.

It proved an unhappy shelter! The top of the tree rose to the clouds as if to attract the electric fluid, and the rain falling down the branches served as its conductor. All at once a fearful explosion was heard, and the unfortunate man fell dead without having had time to breathe a sigh.

Taken away by the death Cæsar always wished for,¹ and of which the least said the better, M. de Borose was interred with the most complete religious ceremonies, and was followed to the cemetery of Père La Chaise by a number of people on foot and in carriages: his praises were in every

¹ It is said that Cæsar always wished to die suddenly. See Suetonius, *Julius Cæsar*, §87. — TR.

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one's mouth, and when a friendly voice pronounced over his tomb a touching speech, it was reëchoed in the hearts of every bystander.

Herminie was overwhelmed by so great and so unexpected a misfortune; she did not have any convulsions or nervous fits, she did not seek to conceal her sorrows in her own room; but she mourned her father so deeply, so long, and bitterly, that her friends thought the very excess of her grief would become its remedy, for we are not made of such stern stuff as to be able to bear for any length of time such overpowering feelings.

Time, after all, exercised its usual influence on this youthful heart; Herminie was able to hear the name of her father without melting in tears; but she spoke of him with such gentle piety, and such artless regret, with so true a love and with such heartfelt words, that it was impossible to hear her, and not to share in her emotion.

Happy will be the man to whom Herminie gives the right of accompanying her, and of laying with her a funeral wreath on the tomb of *their* father!

In a side-chapel of the church of . . . is to be seen every Sunday, at the twelve o'clock mass, a lady of a certain age accompanying a tall and good-looking young girl, whose figure is charming, but whose countenance is concealed by a thick veil. Nevertheless, her features seem to be known, for around the chapel can be seen a crowd of young men who have only lately become pious, who are elegantly dressed, and of whom some are very good-looking.¹

¹ It is now almost impossible to discover why our author devoted so many pages to the education, accomplishments, and charms of Miss Herminie de Borose, whilst remaining silent about her gastronomic exploits. We did, however, not feel ourselves called upon to omit these pages. — Tr.

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THE RETINUE OF AN HEIRESS

147. As I was going one day from the Rue de la Paix to the Place Vendôme, I was stopped by the retinue of the richest heiress of Paris, a young lady of marriageable age, who was then coming from the Bois de Boulogne.

It was composed as follows: —

1. The fair young lady, the object of all desires, on a very fine bay horse, which she managed skilfully, dressed in a blue riding-habit with a long train, and having on her head a black hat with white feathers.

2. Her guardian, walking by her side, with the grave countenance and the important appearance belonging to his functions.

3. Twelve or fifteen young men on horseback, all trying to distinguish themselves, either by the attentions they showed her, or by their hippiatric address, or by their melancholic looks.

4. An *en-cas*¹ drawn by magnificent horses, to be used in case of rain or fatigue; on the box a very corpulent coachman, and behind a very small “tiger.”

5. Servants on horseback, in all kinds of liveries, in great number, and pell-mell.

They passed on . . . and I continued my meditations.

¹ An *en-cas* seems to mean here “a carriage containing lunch.” *En-cas* were the meals called, always held ready for Louis XIV and Napoleon I, in case they should feel hungry. If merely a carriage were meant, I cannot see why our author should describe “the retinue of an heiress.” — TR.

MEDITATION XXX

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GASTRONOMICAL MYTHOLOGY

148. GASTEREA is the tenth muse. She presides over the enjoyments of taste.

She might lay claim to the empire of the universe, for the universe is nothing without life, and all that has life requires nourishment.

She delights specially to dwell on those banks where the vine flourishes, or on those which the orange tree perfumes, in the thickets where the truffle is developed, and in the countries which abound in game and fruit.

When she deigns to show herself, she appears under the form of a young girl; her belt is the colour of fire, her hair is black, her eyes azure blue, and her figure full of grace. As beautiful as Venus, she is, above all, the queen of loveliness.

She shows herself rarely to mortals; but her statue consoles them for her invisibility. Only one sculptor has been admitted to contemplate so many charms; and such has been the success of this artist, beloved by the gods, that whoever sees his work, believes he recognises the features of the woman he most loved.

Of all the places where Gasterea has altars, the one she prefers is that town, queen of the world, which the Seine imprisons between the marbles of its palaces.

Her temple is built on that celebrated mountain to

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which Mars has given his name,¹ and stands on an immense block of white marble, which can be approached by a hundred steps from all sides.

It is in this venerated structure that are excavated those mysterious caverns, where Art interrogates Nature, and submits her to its laws.

It is there that air, water, iron, and fire, put into motion by skilful hands, divide, combine, triturate, amalgamate, and produce effects of which the vulgar do not know the cause.

It is from this spot, finally, that come, at definite times, those marvellous recipes whose authors desire to remain unknown, because their happiness lies in their conscience, and because their reward consists in thinking that they have enlarged the limits of science, and procured to men new enjoyments.

The temple, a unique monument of simple and majestic architecture, is supported by four hundred columns of oriental jasper, and lighted by a dome imitating the celestial vault.

We will not enter into the details of the marvels contained in this edifice; let it suffice to state that the sculptures ornamenting the pediment, as well as the bas-reliefs that decorate the enclosure, are consecrated to the memory of men who have deserved well of their country by useful inventions, such as the application of fire to the wants of life, the invention of the plough, and so forth.

Far from the dome, and within the sanctuary, the statue of the goddess can be seen; she has her left hand leaning on an oven, and holds in her right hand the productions most beloved by those who worship her.

¹ Montmartre. — TR.

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She stands underneath a crystal canopy, supported by eight columns of the same material; and these columns, continually inundated by electric light,¹ produce in this sacred spot a brightness almost divine.

The worship of this goddess is simple: every day, at sunrise, her priests come to take away the crown of flowers which adorns her statue, placing on it a fresh one, and singing in chorus one of the numerous hymns by which poetry has celebrated the boons which this immortal being sheds upon the human race.

These priests, to the number of twelve, presided over by the oldest, are chosen among the most learned; and the handsomest, all things being equal, obtain the preference. They are of mature age, and can become old, but never decrepit, for the air which they breathe in the temple prevents this.

The feasts of the goddess are equal in number to the days of the year, for she never ceases to shower down her kindnesses; but among these days there is one specially consecrated to her, namely, the 21st September, termed the grand gastronomic festival.²

On this solemn day the queenly-town is from early morning covered with a cloud of incense; the people, crowned with flowers, traverse the streets, singing the praises of the goddess; the inhabitants call each other most endearing names; all hearts are full of the sweetest emotions; the atmosphere is laden with sympathy, and disperses everywhere feelings of love and friendship.

A part of the day is passed in such effusions, and at the

¹ In the original *flamme électrique*. "O! my prophetic soul! mine uncle!" as Shakespeare says. Electric light in 1826! — Tr.

² The original has *halel*, from an Arab word, meaning "to pray." — Tr.

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hour ordained by custom the crowds flock towards the temple where the sacred banquet must be celebrated.

In the sanctuary, at the foot of the statue, is erected a table for the college of the priests. Another table of twelve hundred covers is also in readiness under the dome for the guests of both sexes. All the arts have combined to adorn these festive tables. Nothing so elegant has ever been seen in the palaces of kings.

The priests make their appearance with a grave and serious mien. They are clad in a white tunic of cashmere wool, with flesh-coloured embroidery around its edges, whilst a belt of the same colour retains its folds. Their countenance denotes health and benevolence; they sit down after having bowed to each other.

Then servants, dressed in fine linen, place food before them, but not the ordinary dishes prepared to appease the wants of the vulgar; naught is served up at this august table which is not thought worthy of it, and which is not transcendently exquisite, as well by the choice of materials as by the labour bestowed upon it.

The venerable guests are more than able to fulfil their functions; their peaceful and substantial conversation is all about the marvels of creation and the power of gastronomic art; they eat slowly and taste attentively; the motion of their jaws has a somewhat velvety sound: it may be said that every bite has its own particular intonation; and if they happen to moisten with their tongue their shiny lips, the cook who has prepared the dish they have tasted acquires an immortal glory.

The beverages which follow one another at intervals are worthy of the banquet; they are poured out by twelve youthful maidens, chosen, for this day only, by a committee

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of painters and sculptors. They are clad in Greek tunics, a costume which happily enhances beauty without alarming modesty.

The priests of the goddess do not pretend to turn away their heads in a hypocritical manner, while pretty hands pour out for them the delicacies of the Old and New Worlds; but, whilst admiring the most beautiful work of the Creator, wisdom and prudence appear always to sit on their brows; and the manner in which they express their thanks, and in which they drink, expresses both these sentiments.

Around this mysterious table we see circulate kings, princes, and illustrious strangers, who have arrived expressly from all parts of the world, walk in silence and observe everything attentively; they have come to be instructed in the great art of eating well — a difficult art, and of which entire nations are yet ignorant.

Whilst these things take place in the sanctuary, a general and lively gaiety animates the guests seated around the table under the dome.

This gaiety is, above all, due to the fact that not one of them is placed beside a woman to whom he has told everything he could tell. This is the command of the goddess.

Around this immense table have been called, by choice, the learned of both sexes who have enriched gastronomic art by their discoveries; those masters of a house who have fulfilled with so much charm the duties of French hospitality; the cosmopolite *savants* to whom society owes useful or agreeable importations; and those charitable men who nourish the poor with the remains of their superfluity.

The centre of this table is hollowed out, and leaves plenty of room for a crowd of carvers and waiters, who pre-

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sent and bring even to the farthest ends everything which the guests ask for.

There is placed advantageously everything that Nature in her prodigality has created to serve as food for man. There treasures are multiplied a hundredfold, not merely by their association, but also by the changes art has made them undergo. This enchanter has united the Old and the New Worlds, confounded all kingdoms and shortened distances: the odour which arises from those scientific dishes perfumes the air, and fills it with exciting gases.

However, some young, handsome, and well-dressed boys, walk round the external circle, and present incessantly cups filled with delicious wine, which sometimes glitters like a ruby, sometimes has the more modest colour of the topaz.

From time to time skilled musicians, placed in the galleries of the dome, make the temple re-echo with the melodious accents of a harmony as simple as well composed.

Then all heads are raised, and everybody becomes attentive, and during these short intervals all conversations are suspended; but they recommence soon with greater pleasure; for it appears as if this new present of the gods has given to the imagination more freshness, and to all hearts more confidence.

When the pleasures of the table have filled up the time assigned to them, the college of priests advances to the edge of the enclosure; they come to take part in the banquet, to mix with the guests, and to drink with them the Mocha which the legislator of the East permits to his disciples. The aromatic beverage smokes in vases chased with gold, and the fair female acolytes of the sanctuary traverse the assembly to distribute the sugar, which chases away its

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bitterness. They look charming; nevertheless, such is the influence of the air breathed in the temple of Gasterea, that no heart of any woman present is accessible to jealousy.

Finally, the eldest of the priests entones a hymn of gratitude. All the voices join in it, and the instruments play in unison. This homage of all hearts rises towards Heaven, and the service is over.

Then only commences the popular banquet, for those are not true feasts which the people do not enjoy.

Tables, of which the eye cannot perceive the end, are erected in all streets, in all squares, and before all palaces. People sit where they like; accident draws near all ranks, ages, and parishes; hands are outstretched and grasped with cordiality; only happy faces are visible.

Although the great city is then only an immense dining-hall, the generosity of some individuals assures abundance, whilst a paternal government watches with solicitude over the maintenance of order, so that the last limits of sobriety should not be overstepped.

Soon a lively and animated music is heard. It announces the beginning of dancing, that exercise which young people like so much.

Immense rooms, moveable platforms, have been prepared, and refreshments of every sort are not lacking.

Large crowds hasten thither, some to dance; others to encourage dancing as mere spectators. It is funny to see some old people, animated with a transient fire, offer up to beauty an ephemeral homage; but the worship of the goddess and the solemnity of the day excuse everything.

The feast is kept up for a long while: happiness is general, and everybody is in motion; it is painful to hear the last hour strike, which announces that it is time to go and rest.

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Nevertheless, no one is deaf to this appeal; everything has gone off with decency; every one leaves satisfied with his day, and goes to sleep full of hope in the events of another year that has commenced under such happy auspices.

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WHOEVER has read me thus far with that attention I have endeavoured to excite and sustain, ought to have seen that in writing I had a double object in view, I never lost sight of; the first was to lay down the theoretical basis of Gastronomy, so that she should take her place among the sciences in that rank which is incontestably due to her; the second, to define with precision what ought to be understood by gourmandise, and to separate for all time that social quality from gluttony and intemperance, with which it has been unfortunately confounded.

This confusion was introduced by intolerant moralists, who, being deceived by an extravagant zeal, were seeing excesses where there was only a well-regulated enjoyment; for the treasures of creation have not been called into existence to be trod under foot. This impression has been afterwards propagated by unsociable grammarians who wrote definitions with their eyes shut, and swore in verba magistri.

It is time such an error were given up, for at present there is no longer any misunderstanding; and this is so true that, though there is not a person who has not a slight spice of gourmandise in his composition who does not pride himself in it, there is not one who will not consider it a gross insult to be accused of gluttony, voracity, or intemperance.

It appears to me that what I have written on these two cardinal points up to the present time is equivalent to a demonstration, and ought to be sufficient to persuade all those who are open to conviction. I might, therefore, lay my pen aside and regard the task I have imposed on myself as finished; but in fathoming subjects that touch on everything, many things have been recalled to my memory which seemed to me too good to be lost, anecdotes which have never been published, witticisms that were said in my presence, some important culinary receipts, and other similar side-dishes.

If these had been put in the theoretical part of this work, they would have interrupted the harmony of the whole; as a collection, I trust they will yield the reader some pleasure, because, in an amusing form, a few experimental truths and useful developments may be found therein.

As I have already stated, I like to introduce something of my own personal history, which gives rise neither to discussions nor to commentaries. I have looked for the reward of my labour in this part of my

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book, where I find myself in the company of my friends. It is above all when existence is ready to leave us that the ego becomes dear to us, and if one speaks of oneself, one must of course also mention one's friends.

Still, in reading over again its passages that are personal to myself, I do not conceal that I have had some moments of uneasiness.

This anxiety originated in my last lectures, in fact, my very last, and in the commentaries which have been made on memoirs that are in the hands of everybody.

I fear some wag who has digested and slept badly will say: "Here is a professor who is never abusive! Here is a professor who is always paying compliments to himself! Here is a professor who . . . ! Here is a professor who . . . !"

To which I reply beforehand, whilst putting myself on the defensive, that whoever does not say harm of any one may surely treat himself also with some indulgence, and that I see no reason why I should be excluded from exercising my own feeling of goodwill towards all men, I who have never fostered any malicious feelings against any one.

After having replied in this manner, which in reality is well founded, I believe I may be perfectly tranquil, and take shelter underneath my philosophic cloak; and I declare to be disagreeable fellows¹ those persons who insist upon attacking me. Mauvis coucheurs is a new epithet, for which I ought to take out a patent, because I am the first who has discovered that it contains within itself a real excommunication.

¹ The original has *mauvais coucheurs*, literally "bad sleepers," which is even now in use as a slang term. — TR.

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I

THE CURÉ'S¹ OMELETTE

EVERYBODY knows that Madame R . . .² has occupied for twenty years the throne of beauty in Paris unchallenged; it is also well known that she is extremely charitable, and that, at a certain epoch, she took an interest in a majority of those schemes whose object was to succour misery, often felt more severely in the capital than anywhere else.³

Wishing to consult M. le Curé on some charitable subject, she called upon him at about five o'clock in the afternoon, and was surprised to find him already at table.

She who lived in the Rue du Mont-Blanc in Paris thought that everybody dined at six o'clock, not knowing that in general ecclesiastics commence early, because many of them take a light collation in the evening.

Madame Récamier was about to retire; but the curé begged her to stay, either because the business on which they were to talk was not of a nature to prevent him from dining, because a pretty woman is never in anybody's way; or, perhaps, because he saw that he only wanted a person to talk to to make of his room a real gastronomic Elysium.

The table was very neatly laid indeed; some old wine sparkled in a crystal decanter; the white china was of the best quality; under the plates were wells of boiling water; and a servant of canonical age, and decently dressed, was waiting on him.

The repast was a happy mean between frugality and luxury. Some crayfish soup had just been removed, and a salmon trout, an omelette, and a salad were placed on the table.

"My dinner shows you what perhaps you did not know," said the priest, smiling; "to-day we must not eat meat, according to

¹ A *curé* in France is somewhat like a vicar in England, whilst the French word *vicair* means a curate. — Tr.

² The original has Madame R . . . but this lady has been already mentioned by name in Meditation XIV as Madame Récamier, a relative of our author. See page 170. — Tr.

³ Those especially are to be pitied whose wants are not known, for, in justice to the Parisians, it should be said that they are charitable, and give alms. In the year X (1801-02), I paid a small weekly pension to an old nun who lived on the sixth story, and who was partly paralysed. This decent woman received enough from her neighbours to live almost comfortably, but she again kept a lay sister who attended on her.

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the laws of the Church." The lady bowed her assent; but, as I have been privately told, she slightly blushed, which did not prevent the curé from eating.

He began his operations with the trout, of which the upper part delayed him not long; the sauce bore proof of a skilful hand, and the pastor's features showed signs of inward satisfaction.

After this first dish had been removed, he attacked the omelette, which was round, full-bellied, and cooked to a nicety.

At the first stroke of the spoon, there ran out a thick juice, that tickled at the same time sight and smell; the dish appeared full of it, and my dear cousin confessed that it made her mouth water.

This sign of sympathy did not escape the curé, accustomed to watch the passions of men; and, as if in answer to a question which Madame Récamier did not ask, he said, "This is a tunny omelette; my cook is an adept at making them, and few people ever taste them without complimenting me." — "I am not at all surprised," replied the lady; "for so tempting an omelette never appears on the tables of the laity."

A salad followed, and I recommend its use to all those who have confidence in me, for salad refreshes without weakening, and comforts without irritating. I usually say it makes one young again.

The dinner did not interrupt their conversation. They talked of the matter in hand, the cause of my cousin calling on him; of the war then raging; of the events of the time; the hopes of the Church; and other topics which make a bad dinner pass, and enliven a good one.

In its turn, dessert came. It consisted of some Semoncel cheese, three Calville apples, and a pot of jam.

Then the servant placed near the curé a small round table, such as was formerly in use, and was called *guéridon*, on which she put a cup of Mocha, quite clear and hot, and filling the room with its aroma.

After having sipped it, the curé said grace, rose, and remarked, "I never take spirits; it is a superfluity I always offer to my guests, but which personally I do not use. I reserve them as a resource for extreme old age, should it please God to let me live so long."

While this conversation was going on time did not stand still, and it struck six. Madame Récamier was in a hurry to get into her carriage, for she had that day some friends to dinner, of whom I was one. She arrived late, according to her usual custom; but, however, she came, still excited by what she had seen and smelt.

Throughout the whole dinner, our hostess spoke of nothing else but of the curé's meal, and, above all, of his tunny omelette.

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Madame Récamier took care to praise its size, its roundness, and its form; from all these indications it was unanimously concluded that it must have been excellent. It was a real sensuous equation which each one made in his own manner.

The subject of the conversation being exhausted, others were introduced, and no one thought of it any more. As for myself, a propagator of useful truths, I thought it my duty to bring to light a preparation I believe as wholesome as agreeable. I got my cook to procure the receipt of it with all the particulars, and I give it here the more willingly to connoisseurs, as I have not been able to find it in any cookery book.

Preparation of a Tunny Omelette

Take for six persons two carp roes; wash them carefully and bleach them well by steeping them for five minutes in boiling water, slightly salted.

Take a piece of fresh tunny as large as a fowl's egg, and a small shallot minced.

Hash together the roes and the tunny, and mix them well; then throw the whole into a saucepan with a pretty good lump of the best butter, and when the butter is melted, fry very lightly. That constitutes the speciality of the omelette.

Take another good lump of butter, mix it with parsley and chives, put it in an oval-shaped omelette dish, squeeze over it the juice of a lemon, and place it on hot embers.

Next, beat up a dozen eggs, as fresh as you can get them, then take the hot roe and the tunny and pour them on the eggs, stirring it all up till it be well mixed.

Then cook the omelette in the usual manner, and do your best to have it of the proper form, thickness, and consistency; lay it skilfully on the oval dish that you have made ready to receive it, and serve up to be eaten at once.

The dish should be reserved for breakfasts, or other meetings of gastronomic connoisseurs, when the guests understand what they are eating, and do not eat in a hurry; let it be especially washed down with some first-rate old wine, and you will see something wonderful.

Theoretical notes on the preparation of this dish

1°. The roes and the tunny should be fried very lightly, and the butter should not be made to boil, otherwise they will become hard, and not mix well with the eggs.

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2°. The omelette dish ought to be hollow, so that the sauce may collect at the bottom, and be served with a spoon.

3°. The omelette dish should be slightly heated, for if it is cold, the china will draw away all the caloric of the omelette, and there will not be heat enough to keep warm the sauce.

II

EGGS IN GRAVY

One day I was travelling with two ladies to Melun.

We left very early in the morning, and on arriving at Montgeron we felt so hungry we could have eaten anything. But there was nothing to eat! The inn we stopped at, although looking decent enough, had no provisions at all; three stage-coaches and two post-chaises had been before us, and like the locusts of Egypt the passengers had devoured everything.

That's what the cook said.

I saw, however, turn on the spit a most beautiful leg of mutton, on which the ladies cast coquettish looks, as they habitually do on everything.

Alas! they cast their looks in vain. The leg of mutton belonged to three Englishmen who had brought it with them, and were waiting for it patiently whilst chatting over a bottle of champagne.

"But, at least," I said, partly annoyed and partly entreating, "cannot you poach these eggs in the gravy of that leg of mutton? With such eggs and a cup of coffee and cream we shall be resigned to our fate."

"Certainly," replied the cook; "the gravy belongs to me by right, and I'll prepare them for you at once." And thereupon he began to break the eggs carefully.

When he was thus occupied, I went up to the fireplace, and, drawing from my pocket my travelling knife, I made on the forbidden joint a dozen deep cuts, through which the gravy ran out to the last drop. When this was done I watched carefully the preparation of the eggs in the gravy, for fear that some one might wrong us, and take away some. When they were thoroughly done, I took the dish away, and carried it to our room.

We enjoyed a capital meal, and laughed heartily at the thought that in reality we were eating the very substance of the leg of mutton, and left to our English friends only the trouble of masticating the residue.

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III

A NATIONAL VICTORY

During my stay in New York I sometimes went to spend an evening at a sort of coffee-tavern kept by a Mr. Little, where one could have every forenoon a basin of turtle-soup, and at night all the usual refreshments of the United States.

I took there often the Viscount de la Massue and Jean-Rodolphe Fehr, formerly a broker at Marseilles, both *émigrés*¹ like myself. I treated them to a welch-rabbit, which we washed down with ale or cider, and spent the evening quietly speaking of our misfortunes, our pleasures, and our expectations.

There we made the acquaintance of a Mr. Wilkinson, a Jamaica planter, and of a man who, without doubt, was one of his friends, for he always was with him.

The latter, whose name I never knew, was one of the most extraordinary men I ever saw. He had a square face, sharp eyes, and appeared to examine everything attentively; but he never spoke, and his features were as immoveable as those of a blind man.

Only when he heard a joke or something humorous, his face expanded; he closed his eyes, and opening a mouth as wide as the bell of a horn, he gave vent to a prolonged sound which was like a kind of laughter and neighing, and is called in English a "horse laugh"; then everything went on as usual, and he resumed his habitual taciturnity: his laugh had the effect and the duration of a flash of lightning which cleared the atmosphere. As for Mr. Wilkinson, who appeared about fifty, he had the manners and the outward bearing of a gentleman.

These two Englishmen appeared much to value our society, and had already partaken several times, without wanting much pressing, of the frugal meal I offered to my friends, when one evening Mr. Wilkinson took me aside and told me he wanted to invite us all three to dinner.

I thanked him; and as I thought I had sufficient authority to act for my friends, I accepted for all three, and an appointment was made for three o'clock for the next day but one.

The evening was spent as usual; but just as I was going away

¹ The word *émigré* is generally only applied to those who during the first French Revolution left their native country from political motives. — Tr.

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the waiter took me aside and told me that the Jamaica planters had ordered a good dinner, and had given special directions for the wine and spirits to be very good, as they regarded the invitation as a challenge to test who should drink most, and that the man with the big mouth had said that he hoped he would put the three Frenchmen under the table.

This news would have made me refuse to go to this banquet, if I could have done so with credit to myself, for I have always avoided such orgies; but it was impossible. The English planters would have proclaimed everywhere that we dared not accept the combat, and that their presence alone sufficed to make us retreat. Therefore, although forewarned of the danger, we adopted the saying of Marshal Saxe, "Since the wine is drawn it must be drunk!"¹

I was not without some regret; but, in fact, these regrets were not for myself.

I looked upon it as certain that I, being at the same time younger, taller, and more vigorous than my host, and having a constitution which had never been tried by strong drinks, would triumph easily over those two Englishmen, probably worn out by their abuse of spirituous liquors.

Without doubt, if I had remained seated to the last in the midst of four prostrate figures, I might have been proclaimed conqueror; but my sole victory would have been singularly weakened by the downfall of my two fellow-countrymen, who would have been carried off with the slain in the hideous condition that follows such a defeat. I wanted to avoid this scandal; and I wished the French nation to triumph, and not the individual.

I sent for both Fehr and La Massue, addressed them in a severe and formal manner, and warned them to be careful. I advised them to drink small quantities at a time, to throw away some liquor while I was attracting the attention of our antagonists, and above all to eat slowly, and to keep a little appetite in reserve, for food mixed with drink diminishes in strength, and prevents it flying to the brain with so much violence. Moreover, we shared between us a plate of bitter almonds, which I had heard praised for their quality of moderating the fumes of wine.

Thus armed, physically and morally, we went to Little's, where we found the Jamaica planters, and soon after dinner was served.

¹ Hermann Maurice, Count de Saxe (1696-1750), was an illegitimate son of Augustus, Elector of Saxony, and King of Poland, and Aurora von Koenigsmark. He was one of the bravest generals of Louis XV, was made a marshal in 1744, and marshal-general in 1747. It is said that the above quoted saying of the marshal was uttered before the battle of Fontenoy. — Ta.

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It consisted of an enormous piece of roast-beef, a turkey cooked in its own gravy, vegetables, a salad,¹ and a jam-tart.

We drank in the French fashion, that is to say, the wine was served from the very beginning of the dinner. It was very good claret, which was then cheaper in the United States than in France, because lately several cargoes had arrived which had to be sold very cheaply.

Mr. Wilkinson did the honours admirably, invited us to taste of everything, and gave us the example; his friend seemed buried in his plate, not saying anything, and looking at us sideways, and laughing with the corners of his mouth.

As for me, I was delighted with my two acolytes. La Massue, although gifted with a rather large appetite, was as careful with his dinner as a fanciful young lady; and Fehr from time to time got rid of several glasses of wine, which he adroitly poured into a beer-pot which stood at the bottom of the table. As for me, I boldly held my own with the Englishmen, and the longer the repast lasted the more I felt my confidence increase.

After the claret came port, after port Madeira, to which we stuck for a long while.

When the dessert came on, which consisted of butter, cheese, cocoanuts, and hickory-nuts,² toasts were proposed, and we drank amply to the health of all kings, to the Liberty of peoples, and to the beauty of the ladies; we even drank with Mr. Wilkinson to the health of his daughter Maria, whom, he assured us, was the prettiest girl in the whole island of Jamaica.

After the wine came the spirits, that is to say, rum, brandy, and raspberry-brandy;³ with the spirits came songs, and I saw that it was getting rather hot for us.

I was afraid of the spirits, and to avoid them I asked for some punch; Mr. Little himself brought in a bowl, no doubt prepared beforehand, which was large enough for forty people. In France such capacious drinking-vessels do not exist.

This sight restored my courage; I ate five or six pieces of toast well buttered, and I felt my strength renewed.

Then I cast a scrutinising glance on everything around me, for I began to feel uneasy about the finish. My two friends appeared comparatively sober; they drank while eating hickory-nuts. Mr. Wilkinson's face was crimson, his eyes looked glassy, and he ap-

¹ M. Brillat-Savarin speaks of a salad *de choux crus*, or of raw cabbages, by which he means "Coss lettuces," then scarcely known in France. — Ta.

² Our author has a phonetic way of spelling "hickory," namely, *ycory*. — Ta.

³ I do not know if "raspberry-brandy" is still used in the States; "peach-brandy" is. — Ta.

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peared done for. His friend held his tongue, but his head smoked like a boiling caldron, and his immense mouth was sticking out. I perceived that the catastrophe was near.

Suddenly, Mr. Wilkinson seemed to wake up, started to his feet, and began to sing, in a loud voice, the national air, "Rule Britannia"; but he could not get on any farther; his strength failed him, and he fell back on his chair, and thence rolled under the table. His friend seeing him in such a state, gave vent to one of his loudest horse-laughs, and, stooping down to assist him, fell by his side.

It is impossible to explain the satisfaction I felt at this sudden result, and the weight which it took from my mind. I hastened to ring for the landlord, who came up, and after having told him, as was customary, "to see those gentlemen properly attended to," we drank with him a parting glass of punch to their health.

Meanwhile the waiter came with his assistants to take possession of the vanquished, whom they carried home between them "feet foremost,"¹ the friend preserving absolute immobility, and Mr. Wilkinson still trying to sing his favourite air, "Rule Britannia."

The next morning the New York newspapers, afterwards copied by all the other papers in the States, gave a pretty exact account of everything that had happened, with the remark that the two Englishmen were ill in consequence of the dinner. I therefore went to call upon them. I found the friend quite stupefied and suffering from a severe attack of indigestion, and Mr. Wilkinson confined to his chair by an attack of gout, brought on probably by our Bacchanalian contest. He appeared pleased with my visit, and said to me amongst many other things, "My dear sir, you are very good company indeed, but too hard a drinker for us."

IV

ABLUTIONS

I have already stated that the vomitorium of the Romans was repugnant to the delicacy of our manners;² but I am afraid I have committed an imprudence, and that I shall be obliged to retract my statement.

Let me explain this.

¹ In English this expression is applied, according to our author, to those people who are carried off intoxicated or dead drunk.

² See Meditation XIV, 75, page 165. Read also on this subject in Mr. J. Cordy Jeaffreson's *A Book about the Table*, vol. 1, chap. xv, "Cruelties and Curiosities," the history of the provand of Judge Rumsey. — Ta.

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About forty years ago some persons of the upper classes, nearly always ladies, used to be rinsing their mouths after meals.

Just before leaving the table a servant presented them a basin of water; they turned round so that no one could see them, took a mouthful, and very quickly emptied it in a saucer. The servant then took everything away, and the whole performance was done so deftly that hardly any one perceived it.

But we have changed all that.

In those houses where they pride themselves on their fashionable manners, it is now the custom for servants, towards the end of the dessert, to hand to each of the guests a bowl full of cold water, in the midst of which stands a goblet of hot water. Then, before the whole company, people dip their fingers in the cold water, so that it may look as if they had washed them, and take the hot water in the mouth, gargle themselves noisily with it, and then eject it into the goblet or into the bowl.

I am not the only one who has protested against an innovation as useless as it is indecent and disgusting.

It is useless, because, among all persons who know how to eat, the mouth is clean at the end of a meal; it is cleansed either by fruit, or by the last glasses we are accustomed to drink at dessert. As for the hands, they ought not to be made dirty by use; moreover, every one has a napkin on which he can wipe them.

It is indecent, for it is a generally recognised principle that all ablutions should be done in the privacy of the dressing-room.

It is particularly disgusting, for the loveliest and most tempting lips lose all their charms when they perform the functions of an evacuating organ. What will it be then if such a mouth is neither pretty nor youthful? And what shall we say of those enormous gaping clefts that show abysses which are apparently without a bottom, and which exhibit teeth attacked by time. *Proh pudor!* Such a ridiculous practice is the result of an affectation of pretentious cleanliness, which is neither according to our taste nor to our manners.

When once certain limits are overstepped, people do not know where to stop; and I cannot say what purifications may yet take place in our presence.

Since the official appearance of those new-fashioned bowls, I utter lamentations day and night. Like a new Jeremiah, I bewail the aberration of fashion; and when on my travels, never enter a dining-room without expecting to find there some abominable utensil.¹

¹ It is well known that in England there are, or, rather, there were, dining-rooms a few

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V

MYSTIFICATION OF THE PROFESSOR AND DEFEAT OF THE GENERAL

Some years ago the newspapers announced the discovery of a new perfume; the *Hemerocallis*, a bulbous plant which has in fact a very agreeable odour, somewhat resembling that of jessamine.

I am very inquisitive, and rather a loiterer, and therefore one fine day wound my way towards the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where I was going to find this perfume, "the chosen delight of the nostrils," as the Turks say.

I was received there, as every customer will always be received, and they took for me, out of the *sanctum sanctorum* of a well-fitted-up chemist's shop, a little box carefully wrapped up, and which appeared to hold two ounces of those precious crystals; a politeness which I acknowledged by paying three francs, according to those rules of compensation of which every day M. Azais¹ enlarges the scope and principles.

A novice would have opened the box at once, smelt and tasted it, but a professor acts differently; and I think that in such a case solitude is advisable. I went home at a professional pace, and soon, nestled on my couch, I was prepared to experience a new sensation.

I took the box with the scent from my pocket, and out of the papers with which it was wrapped up. There were three differently printed documents, all referring to the *Hemerocallis*, to its natural history, to its culture, to its flowering, and to the delicate enjoyments that might be derived from its perfume, whether it was concentrated in pastilles, mixed in culinary preparations, whether it appeared on our tables, dissolved in alcoholic liqueurs or combined with ice-cream. I read attentively the three printed wrappers. 1. To indemnify myself for the compensation I have

years ago where there was no necessity to leave the room for anything; this was strange but handy, and was perhaps of less consequence in a country where the ladies withdraw as soon as the gentlemen begin to drink wine.

¹ Pierre Hyacinthe Azais (1766-1845), a philosopher and moralist, who wrote, amongst other works, a book *On Compensations in Human Destinies*, in which he maintains that "the sum total of destruction must necessarily equal the sum total of recomposition, since all beings are alternately formed and decomposed, and since the universe remains immovable. . . . Misfortune, in the whole of human life, is necessarily proportioned to happiness; just as the power of formation is balanced by that of destruction. Therefore, there is *compensation*." — Tr.

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already mentioned. 2. To prepare myself conveniently for the appreciation of the new treasure extracted from the vegetable kingdom.

I opened therefore, with all due reverence, the box which I supposed full of pastilles. But I was surprised and pained to find, within a second copy of the three printed documents I had just greedily perused, and merely as accessories, about two dozen lozenges; and to get these I had travelled all the way to the noble Faubourg Saint-Germain.

To begin with, I tasted them, and I must render homage to the truth by admitting that I found these pastilles very agreeable; but I regret all the more that, in spite of outward appearances, there were so few of them; and, in fact, the more I thought about it, the more I felt myself made a fool of.

I rose, therefore, with the intention of taking back the box to the shop where I bought it, even if they kept the money; but in getting up I perceived my grey hairs in a looking-glass; I laughed at my vivacity and sat down again, though I felt annoyed. This annoyance has lasted a long while, as my readers can see. Moreover, a particular consideration retained me; I had bought these pastilles from a chemist, and not four days ago I had been an eyewitness of the extreme imperturbability of one of the members of that respectable profession.

I am going to tell my readers another anecdote; to-day is the 17th of June of the year of our Lord 1825, and I am in a narrative mood. May Heaven grant that this mood does not become a public calamity!

I went one morning to pay a visit to General Bouvrier des Éclats, my friend and countryman.

I found him walking up and down his room in a state of agitation, and crushing between his hands a piece of paper, on which I thought were written some verses.

"Here," he said, handing it to me, "give me your opinion of this; you are a judge of such things."

I took the paper, and having glanced over it, I saw to my great astonishment that it was a bill for medicines supplied to the General; so that my services were not required as a poet, but simply as a *pharmaconomist*.¹

"Upon my word, my dear friend," I said, giving him back his property, "you know the customs of the corporation whose services you have engaged; they have perhaps gone a little too far; but why do you wear an embroidered coat, three orders, and a

¹ *Pharmaconome*, another word invented by our author. — Tr.

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cocked hat, with golden tassels? Those are three aggravating circumstances, and you will not get the best of it."

"Hold your tongue!" he said impatiently; "this charge is abominable. But you'll see the swindler directly, for I have sent for him; he is coming, and you will back me up."

He was still speaking, when the door opened, and in came a man of about fifty-five, dressed with care. His bearing was lofty, his demeanour grave, and his whole countenance bore a uniform impress of severity, belied by something sardonic lurking around his mouth and in his eyes.

He drew near the fireplace, refused to sit down, and I was present at the following dialogue, which I have accurately preserved.

The General. — Sir, the note which you have sent me is a regular apothecary's bill,¹ and . . .

The Man in Black. — Sir, I am not an apothecary.

The General. — What are you then, sir?

The Man in Black. — Sir, I am a chemist.

The General. — Well, Mr. Chemist, your man must have told you . . .

The Man in Black. — Sir, I have no men.

The General. — Then, what was that young fellow who called?

The Man in Black. — Sir, he is my pupil.

The General. — I wished to tell you, sir, that your drugs . . .

The Man in Black. — Sir, I do not sell drugs.

The General. — What, then, do you sell, sir?

The Man in Black. — Sir, I sell medicines.

There the discussion ended. The General, ashamed of having made so many blunders, and of being so little versed in a knowledge of the pharmaceutical language, lost his self-possession, forgot what he had to say, and paid the bill in full.

VI

THE DISH OF EELS

In Paris there lived sometime ago in the Rue Chaussée d'Antin, a certain person whose name was Briguet, who had been a coachman, and afterwards a horse-dealer, and had made a small fortune.

He was a native of Talissieu,² and when he went back there, he

¹ In French a bill containing overcharges is called familiarly *un vrai compte d'apothicaire*; the reason for this is obvious. — Tn.

² A small village in the Department of the Ain, in the arrondissement of Belley, the birth-place of our author. — Tn.

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married a woman who had a little money, and had formerly been a cook at Madame Thévenin's,¹ whom all Paris knew by her nickname of "Ace of Spades."

An opportunity presented itself of acquiring a small property in his native village; so he bought it, and established himself there with his wife towards the end of 1791.

At that time it was the custom for vicars of the entire presbyterial circuit to meet once a month at the house of one of them in turn, to confer on ecclesiastical matters. High mass was said, after which a conference was held, and then they went to dinner.

This was called "The Conference," and the vicar, at whose house it was to take place, did not fail to make some preparations so as to receive his colleagues well and as became them.

But when it was the turn of the vicar of Talissieu it happened that one of his parishioners had made him a present of a magnificent eel, more than three feet long, caught in the limpid waters of Serans.

Delighted at possessing a fish of such dimensions, the clergyman was afraid his cook would not be able to prepare such a promising dish; he went therefore to Mistress Briguet, did homage to her superior knowledge, and begged her to put her hand to a dish worthy of an archbishop, and which would do the greatest honour to her dinner.

His docile parishioner consented to do so without any difficulty, and with so much the more pleasure, she said, because she had still in her possession a small box containing various rare seasonings which had been employed by her former mistress.

The dish of eels was prepared with care, and served up separately. Not only did it look very well, but it sent forth a most delightful smell, and after it had been tasted, words were wanting to praise it sufficiently; needless to say, that the eels entirely disappeared and that not a morsel was left.

But it so happened that when the dessert was on the table the venerable company felt emotions of an unaccustomed nature; and as physics have naturally some influence on morals, the conversation turned on the ladies.

Several of them told some very good stories of their adventures whilst in the seminary; others quizzed their neighbours about some scandal that was told about them; in short, they conversed for a considerable time about the nicest of the capital sins; and what was even more remarkable, they did not even suspect that

¹ Madame Thévenin (1763-1841) was an actress, very dark and rather stout, hence her nickname. — *Tr.*

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they had given rise to any scandal, for the deuce knows what he is about. •

They separated at a late hour, and my Secret Memoirs do not tell me what happened further on that day; but when the next conference took place, and the vicars met again, they were ashamed of what they had done, begged each other's pardon for all that had been said, and attributed everything to the influence of the dish of eels; so that whilst admitting that it was delicious, they nevertheless agreed it would not be prudent to try the skill of Mistress Briguet a second time.

I have searched everywhere in vain to ascertain what sort of a condiment produced such marvellous effects, the more so as nobody complained that it had been of a dangerous or corrosive nature.

The culinary artist admitted that she had made use of a crayfish sauce strongly spiced; but I am certain she did not say everything she knew.

VII

THE ASPARAGUS

M. Cortois de Quincey,¹ Bishop of Belley, was told one day that a head of a marvellous size had just appeared above one of the asparagus beds of his kitchen garden.

Immediately everybody ran to the spot to ascertain the truth of the story; for, even in Episcopal palaces, people are delighted with having something to do.

The news was found to be neither false nor exaggerated: the head stuck out the earth, and appeared already above the ground. It was round, shiny, variegated, and gave promise of an asparagus the size of a column, and so thick that the hand could hardly span it.

This horticultural phenomenon was the talk of every one. It was clear that the bishop alone had the right of cutting it, and an order was immediately given to a neighbouring cutler to make a knife specially for this lofty purpose.

For several days the asparagus continued to grow, and to look more charming and beautiful; its progress was slow, but gradual, and soon people began to perceive that part of the white stalk which is not fit to be eaten.

The time for cutting it having come, a good dinner was first

¹ Gabriel Cortois de Quincey was Bishop of Belley from 1751 to 1790. — *Ta.*

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given, and then the operation was delayed until after the bishop and his guests had come back from their walk.

Then the bishop advanced, with the official knife in his hand, stooped gravely, and began to separate the proud vegetable from its stalk, while the whole of the attendants of the Episcopal court showed some impatience to examine its fibres and contexture.

But, to their surprise, disappointment, and sorrow, the knife would not cut, and the prelate rose with nothing in his hands. The asparagus was a wooden one.

This joke, perhaps carried a little too far, was planned by the Canon Rousset, a native of Saint-Claude,¹ an admirable turner, and a very fair artist.

He had carved a wooden asparagus in perfect imitation of a real one, had stuck it by stealth into the bed, and lifted it a little every day to imitate the nocturnal growth.

The bishop did not know how he ought to take this mystification, for it was really one; but seeing a grin on the faces of all the bystanders, he smiled, and the smile was followed by a general explosion of really Homeric laughter. The *corpus delicti* was then removed, and, without taking any further notice of the perpetration of the joke, for the whole of that evening at least the monster asparagus had the honours of the drawing-room.

VIII

THE PLOT

The Chevalier de Langeac² had been pretty well off, but his fortune had disappeared among those expenses which are compulsory on any man who is rich, young, and good-looking.

He collected what was left of it, and with the assistance of a small pension he received from the Government, lived pretty comfortable at Lyons amongst the best society, for experience had taught him economy.

Although always gallant, he nevertheless danced no longer at-

¹ Saint-Claude, a little town of Franche-Comté, now in the Department of the Jura, was until 1742 governed by an abbot of a Benedictine convent, who was directly appointed by the Pope, and was spiritual and temporal lord of the town. Only noblemen were, in the latter times, allowed to become members of the chapter of this abbey.

² In the first edition of the *Physiologie du Goût*, published a few months before the author's death in 1825, no name, but only *Chevalier de L* —, was printed; in later editions the name was added. Can this chevalier be the same one as a certain Chevalier de Langeac mentioned in Grimm's *Mémoires Historiques, Littéraires, etc.*, whose translation of the beginning of the 16th book of the *Iliad* was publicly and honourably mentioned by the French Academy in 1778? — Ta.

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tendance on the fair sex; he still did not mind taking a hand with them in any game of skill, for he played them all very well, but he coolly defended his money against them, a characteristic of those men who expect nothing more from them.

Gourmandise now took the place of all his other inclinations, and it can be said with truth that he became a professed *gourmand*; and as he was, moreover, very agreeable, he received more invitations than he could accept.

Lyons is a town where people are fond of good living; owing to its geographical position, claret, Hermitage, and Burgundy are easily to be got there; the game of the neighbouring hills is excellent; in the lakes of Geneva and of Bourget the best fish in the world is to be caught; and connoisseurs take great pleasure in the fat pullets of Bresse, which are all sent to this town.

The Chevalier de Langeac had always a knife and fork laid for him at the best tables in Lyons; but where he liked to dine especially was at Mr. A.'s, a very rich banker and a distinguished connoisseur. The chevalier gave as a reason for the preference that he and the banker had been at college together; though spiteful men, for such there are everywhere, attributed his frequent visits to Mr. A. having as his cook the best pupil of Ramier, a skilful culinary artist, who flourished in those remote times.

However, about the end of the winter of 1780, the Chevalier de Langeac received a letter of invitation to come to supper at Mr. A.'s in ten days, for people took supper then. My Secret Memoirs assure me that he was quite delighted, for he thought that an invitation at so long a date showed that it would be a festive banquet of the first class.

He came on the day and at the hour appointed, and found there ten other guests, all people fond of pleasure and of good cheer. The word gastronomer had not yet been borrowed from the Greek, or at least it was not as common as it is at present.

Soon a substantial repast was served them. There was, amongst other things, an enormous sirloin, a fricassee with plenty of chickens, a piece of veal of the most beautiful appearance, and a very nice stuffed carp.

All this was well and good, but did not respond, in the eyes of the chevalier, to the expectations which he had formed from an invitation sent more than ten days beforehand.

Another singularity struck him. The guests, who were all people of good appetite, either did not eat, or merely tasted a bit now and then. One had a headache, another felt cold shivers, a third had dined late, and so with the others. The chevalier was amazed

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to find that, by chance, this supper was far from convivial; and, believing it his duty to be the representative of all these patients, he attacked boldly, carved neatly, and showed good feeding power.¹

The second course had no less solid foundations. An enormous Crémieu turkey faced a very fine pike *au bleu*, both flanked by the six usual side dishes, of which one was full of macaroni with Parmesan cheese; besides this there was a bowl of salad.

At this appearance, the chevalier felt his expiring valour revive, whilst the other guests looked as if they were giving up the ghost. Excited by the change of wines, he triumphed over their weakness, and drank their health in numerous bumpers, with which he washed down a large slice of the pike, which had followed the leg of the turkey.

The side dishes were tackled in their turn, and gloriously he pursued his career, resolved to have for his dessert only a bit of cheese and a glass of Malaga, for sweets formed no part of his programme.

My readers will have observed that M. de Langeac had had already two surprises during supper: the first was, because the dishes were too substantial; the second, to find the guests with such bad appetites. A third surprise, and that a much greater one, was in store for him.

For the servants, instead of bringing the dessert, took away everything that was on the table, the plate as well as the linen, gave others to the guests, and served up four fresh *entrées*, of which the savour rose upwards to the skies.

These were, veal sweetbreads with crayfish sauce, roes and truffles, a larded and stuffed pike, and wings of the large red partridge, with a *purée* of mushrooms.

Like that old magician of whom Ariosto speaks, and who having the beautiful Armida in his power, only made feeble efforts to dishonour her,² M. de Langeac was horrified at the sight of so many good things he could no longer eat, and he commenced to suspect evil intent.

But all the other guests seemed, on the contrary, to gain fresh strength. Their appetites came back, the headaches disappeared, an ironical smile seemed to irradiate their mouths, and it was now their turn to drink to the health of the chevalier, whose eating powers were exhausted.

Nevertheless, he put a good face on the matter, and endeav-

¹ Our author uses here another word of his invention, *intussusception*. — Tr.

² Our learned author here quotes probably from memory, for Armida is not the heroine of Ariosto, but of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*. He means to speak of Angelica, the heroine of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and of her adventure with the Hermit, canto viii, 49. — Tr.

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oured to brave the storm courageously; at the third mouthful Nature revoked, and his stomach threatened to betray him. He was therefore obliged to remain inactive, and as we say in music, he "counted his rests."

What did he not feel when he saw brought up as a third course, snipes by the dozen, on snowy beds of fat, and sleeping on appetising toasts; a pheasant, then a bird extremely rare, and coming from the banks of the Seine; fresh tunny, and all the most elegant *entremets* the culinary art of that time, and the *petit four*, could produce.

He remained in thought for a moment, and then imagined he was bound in honour, right or wrong, to continue the meal, and to die bravely on the field of battle; but soon egotism came to his aid, and inspired him with more sensible ideas.

He reflected that in such a case prudence is not cowardice, that to die from indigestion looks always ridiculous, and that the future had no doubt many compensations in store for him for such a disappointment. He, therefore, made up his mind what to do, and, throwing down his table-napkin, he addressed himself to the banker, and said: "Sir, no man should ever expose his friends thus, you have acted treacherously, and I'll never see you again as long as I live." After having uttered these words he went away.

His departure did not produce a very great sensation, for it showed how successful had been the plot to place M. de Langeac before a first-class meal which he should not be able to eat; and every one of the guests was in the secret.

Nevertheless, the chevalier sulked far longer than could have been believed; and a good deal of kind attention had to be shown before he would be appeased. At length he came back, when the beccaficos were in season, and he thought no more about the trick played upon him when the truffles made their appearance.

IX

THE TURBOT

Discord one day threatened to introduce itself into the bosom of one of the most united families of the capital. It was precisely on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath-day; and the cause of it was a turbot that had to be cooked; it was in the country, at Villecresnes.¹

¹ Villecresnes, a hamlet in the Department of Seine et Oise, with the beautiful castle of Cergy. — Th.

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This fish, snatched, it was said, from a far more glorious fate,¹ was to be served on the morrow at a banquet of nice people, of whom I was one. It was fresh, plump, and looked remarkably well; its size was so much larger than all the pans that could be got that no one knew how to prepare it.

"Well," said the husband, "let us cut it in two." — "Would you dare so to disgrace this poor creature?" asked the wife. "We must do it, my dear, as we cannot do anything else. Bring the chopper, and it will soon be decided!" — "Wait a little, my friend, there will always be time to do that. You know that my cousin is coming; he is a professor, and he will soon find the means to get us out of the difficulty." — "A professor . . . get us out of the difficulty! . . . Nonsense!" And a faithful report informs me that he who spoke thus did not appear to have a great confidence in the professor, and nevertheless that professor was myself!

The difficulty would probably have been got rid of in Alexander the Great's manner,² when I arrived in double-quick time, my nose in the air, and with an appetite I always have when I travel, when it is seven o'clock in the evening, and when the smell of a good dinner titillates my nostrils and solicits my sense of taste.

When I entered the house I attempted in vain to pay the usual compliments. Nobody answered me: because nobody listened to me. Soon the question which absorbed all attention was told me in a family duet: after which both were silent, the lady regarding me with eyes which appeared to say, "I hope that we shall get rid of our difficulty"; the husband looking at me, on the contrary, with a mocking and quizzical air, as if he were certain I would not get out of the scrape, while his right hand rested on the redoubtable chopper that had been brought at his request.

But all these differences disappeared and gave place to a lively curiosity when, with a grave and oracular voice, I pronounced these solemn words, "The turbot remains entire until it is brought up for dinner."

I was certain of not compromising myself, for I had intended to have it baked in an oven; but this method presented a few difficulties, and as I did not explain myself further, I went in silence

¹ No fate could have been more glorious for a turbot than to be eaten by our author and his friends; not even if it had been served up on the table of Napoleon I. The professor is too modest. — *Ta.*

² Alexander the Great cut the Gordian knot in twain with his sword, when they told him that whoever undid it would reign over the whole East. This knot was contrived by Gordius, a peasant chosen king of Phrygia, who dedicated his waggon to Jupiter, and fastened it so ingeniously with a rope of bark that no one could untie it. — *Ta.*

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towards the kitchen — I going first, the husband and wife serving as acolytes, the family representing the faithful, and the cook closing the procession.

The front and back kitchen did not show anything that would suit me; but in the wash-house I saw a boiler, although rather small, well set, and with a good fire-place. I at once perceived that it would do, and, turning towards my retinue, I said, having that faith which removes mountains,¹ "Make your minds easy; the turbot will be cooked whole; it will be cooked by steam, and immediately."

In fact, though it was quite time for dinner, I at once set everybody to work. While some were lighting the fire, I cut from a large hamper a hurdle, exactly the size of this gigantic fish. On this hurdle I put a layer of bulbs and sweet herbs, on which the turbot was laid, after being well washed, thoroughly dried, and with sufficient salt. A second layer of the same seasoning was placed on its back. Then the hurdle was placed on the boiler half-full of water; and the whole was covered with a little tub, around which dry sand was put to prevent the steam from escaping too easily. Soon the water in the boiler was heated, and the steam filled the whole of the tub, which was taken off in about half an hour; then the hurdle was lifted out of the boiler with the turbot done to a nicety, very white, and looking admirably.

When this was going on we sat down to dinner with appetites sharpened by the delay, by our work and by our success, so that we had time enough to arrive at that happy moment, always indicated by Homer,² when the abundance and the variety of the food drives hunger away.

Next day at dinner the turbot was served to the worthy guests,³ who complimented us on its good appearance. Then the master of the house told in what unexpected manner it had been cooked, and I was praised not only for my seasonable invention, but also for its results, for, after having carefully tasted it, it was unanimously decided that fish, cooked in this fashion, is very much better than cooked in a turbot-kettle.

This decision did not surprise anybody, as the fish had not been in boiling water, and, therefore, had not lost any of its properties, but, on the contrary, had been impregnated with the flavour of the seasoning.

¹ An allusion to Matthew xxi, 21, "If ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." — Tn.

² Homer, *passim*, *Iliad*, i, 469, etc. — Tn.

³ Was the turbot served up cold "next day," or, if not, how was it kept warm? Our author is silent on so important a subject. — Tn.

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Whilst my ears were completely saturated with the compliments showered on me, I looked for more sincere evidence by observing the guests, and I saw with secret delight that General Labassée was so satisfied that he smiled at every bit he ate, that the *curé*, with outstretched neck, stared with all his might at the ceiling in complete ecstasy, and that of the two clever *gourmand-academicians* who were amongst the company, the eyes of M. Auger¹ sparkled, and his face was as radiant as that of an author who is applauded, whilst M. Villemain's² head was bent down, and his chin was on one side, like a man who listens with attention.

This deserves to be noticed, as there are very few country houses where there is not everything necessary to make a sort of boiler, such as I used on this occasion; and because it can be employed every time when one wishes to cook something which has come unexpectedly and is of extraordinary dimensions.

However, my readers would have never learned the history of this great adventure if it did not seem to me to lead to results more generally useful.

Those who know the nature and the effects of steam, know also that it has the same temperature as the liquid that produces it; that it can even become a few degrees higher by a slight concentration; and that it accumulates as long as it does not find an issue.

It follows, therefore, that, all things being equal, and by merely taking a larger tub than the one that covered the fish when I tried the experiment, and by substituting, for example, for the tub an empty barrel, we may cook quickly and at a trifling cost, and only through steam, several bushels of potatoes, or vegetables of any sort, in fact, anything that is put on the hurdle and covered with the barrel, either for the use of man or beast; and everything will be cooked in six times less time, and with six times less wood than is necessary merely to boil the water in a boiler containing a hectolitre, or a little more than twenty-two gallons. I think that this very simple way of cooking may be of some importance wherever there is a large bakehouse, either in town or in the country; that is why I have described it so that everybody can understand and profit by it.

I believe that the power of steam has not been sufficiently turned to account for domestic purposes, and I hope that some

¹ Louis-Simon Auger (1772-1829), a literary man, a journalist, and perpetual secretary to the French Academy. — Tn.

² Abel-François Villemain (1790-1870), a celebrated professor, author, and politician, who was for many years minister of public instruction. His *Cours de Littérature française* is still read. — Tn.

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day the bulletin of our Society for the Encouragement of national Industry will tell husbandmen that I am further occupied with it.

P.S. — One day when a committee of gastronomic professors was assembled in the Rue de la Paix, No. 14, I told the story how I had cooked a turbot by steam. When I had finished, a gentleman who sat on my left turned towards me, and asked in a reproachful tone, "Was I not present? And did not I vote as well as the rest?" — "Certainly," said I, "you were there, and you sat next to the *curé*, and without any reproach, you took your share of the fish."

The gentleman who put in his claim was a M. Lorrain, whom Nature had created a first-class *gourmand*, and who was also a financier as agreeable as prudent; he has brought his ship safely into port, so he now can judge calmly of the effects of the tempest; for more than one reason his name deserves therefore to be mentioned here.

X

VARIOUS RESTORATIVE PREPARATIONS

BY THE PROFESSOR

Improvised for the case mentioned in Meditation XXV

A

Take six large onions, three carrots, and a handful of parsley; mince the whole and put it into a stewpan; then heat it and brown it with a good lump of fresh butter.

When this is well done, add to it six ounces of sugar-candy, twenty grains of powdered ambergris, with a piece of crust toasted, and three bottles of water. Boil the whole for three-quarters of an hour, and add fresh water to make up for the loss during the boiling, for there must always be three bottles of liquid.

While this is boiling, kill, pluck, and clean an old cock, pound it with an iron pestle, flesh, bones, and all, in a mortar; and mince also two pounds of first-class beef.

Then mix the pounded fowl and minced-beef together, and add sufficient pepper and salt.

Put it in a stewpan, on a brisk fire, and let it be well heated; then add to it from time to time a little fresh butter, so as to brown the meat nicely without letting it stick to the pan.

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When it is done enough, that is to say, when the osmazome has turned brown, strain the liquid of the first stewpan, and put it slowly and gradually into the second; keep the whole on the boil for three-quarters of an hour, but always add hot water, so as to keep the same quantity of liquid.

At the end of that time the broth is ready, and you have a remedy of which the effect is certain every time the patient is exhausted by some of the causes we have indicated; but possesses nevertheless a stomach that can do its work.

Give him the first day a cup every three hours, until it is time for him to go to bed: on the following days, give him a large cup in the morning only, and a similar quantity every evening, until the three bottles are emptied. The patient must also have a light, but at the same time a nourishing diet, such as a leg of a chicken, fish, sweet fruits, and preserves. It scarcely ever happens that another decoction is needed. About the fourth day, he may return to his ordinary occupations, and should endeavour to be wiser for the future, if such a thing is possible.

If we suppress the ambergris and the sugar-candy, we can in this way, and in a very short time, make a soup of high flavour and worthy of being served up at a dinner of connoisseurs.

Instead of an old cock we can take four old partridges; and instead of the beef, we can take part of a leg of mutton; and the soup will neither be less effective nor less agreeable.

In all cases when one is in a hurry, it is better to mince the meat and to brown it before moistening it, for meats treated in this way take much more caloric than in water. It can, therefore, be used every time when a good meat broth is wanted, and without having five or six hours to wait for it; this may often happen, especially in the country. It is, of course, understood that those who use it should sing the praises of the professor.

B

Everybody knows that if ambergris, considered as a perfume, is injurious to the profane who have delicate nerves, when taken internally it is a splendid tonic, and very exhilarating. Our ancestors used it a good deal in their cookery and were not the worse for it.

It is well known that Marshal Richelieu,¹ of glorious memory,

¹ Louis-François Armand du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu (1706-88), Marshal of France and member of the French Academy, distinguished himself during his long life by his amorous and political intrigues. — TR.

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habitually chewed ambergris pastilles; and as for me, whenever I feel, some day or other, the burden of age, when I think with difficulty, and feel oppressed by some power unknown, I take as much powdered amber as will lay on a shilling with a cup of chocolate, sugar it to my taste, and it has always done me a great deal of good. This tonic renders life more easy, makes thoughts flow with facility; and I do not suffer from that sleeplessness which is the infallible result of a cup of coffee taken with the intention of procuring the same effect.¹

C

The preparation A is for robust temperaments, for men of resolution, and for those in general who have exhausted themselves by overwork. For the nonce I have composed another potion much more agreeable to the taste, of a milder effect, and which I reserve for feeble temperaments, for people of undecided character, and for those, in one word, who get easily exhausted. It is as follows:—

Take a knuckle of veal, weighing at least two pounds, divided in four in its whole length, bone and flesh; let it brown with four onions cut in slices, and a handful of watercresses, and when it is nearly done, put it in the same quantity of water as in preparation A, and boil it for two hours, always taking care to replace the liquid that evaporates, and you 'll have some very good veal broth; add pepper and salt, but not too much.

Pound separately three old pigeons and twenty-five crayfish, quite alive; mix them and brown them in the same way as I advised that the old cock and the meat should be treated in preparation A.

When it has become quite hot, and begins to get dry, moisten it with the veal broth, and keep it on a brisk fire for an hour. Then strain the broth, which may be taken morning and evening, or rather only in the morning, two hours before breakfast. It is also a delicious soup.

I made this preparation for a man of letters and an authoress, who, seeing that I was rather positive in my assertions, took confidence in me, and, as they said, had recourse to my knowledge.

They used it, and have not repented it. The poet, who was merely elegiac, has become romantic; the lady, who had only

¹ Those wonderful effects of ambergris on our author seem the produce of his poetical imagination; in any case it is now only used in perfumery, and is no longer considered a tonic or an excitant. — Tu.

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written a rather feeble novel, with an unfortunate catastrophe, has written a second one, much better, which ends with a good and happy marriage. It is, therefore, self-evident that in both these cases there has been increase of power; and I think honestly that I have reason rather to be proud of it.

XI

THE PULLET OF BRESSE

During one of the first days of the month of January of the current year 1825, a young married couple, M. and Madame de Versy, had been at a grand and festive oysters-luncheon; and we know what that means.

Such luncheons are charming, either because the dishes are all appetising, or because they usually are very lively; but they have the inconvenience of disturbing the whole day.

And so it was on this occasion. At dinner-time the young couple sat down at their own table, but it was only for form's sake. The lady ate a little soup; the gentleman drank a glass of wine and water. Some friends arrived, and they played a game of whist. Thus they spent the evening, and then went to bed.

About two o'clock M. de Versy awoke; he felt quite uncomfortable, yawned, and tossed about so much that his wife got uneasy, and asked him if he was ill. "No, my dear; but I imagine I am hungry, and I cannot help thinking of that white and nice-looking Bresse pullet we had for dinner, and which, nevertheless, we scarcely touched." — "To tell the truth I must admit that I am as hungry as you are; and as you have thought of the pullet, we'll send for it, and we'll eat it." — "What madness! Everybody is asleep, and to-morrow they will laugh at us." — "If every one is asleep, they can wake up, and nobody will laugh at us, for they'll know nothing about it. Besides, who knows if between now and to-morrow morning one of us may not die of hunger? I don't like to run the chance of it, and I am going to ring for Justine."

They immediately rang up the poor lady's maid, who, having had a good supper, slept as one sleeps at nineteen, not tormented by love.¹

She arrived in dishabille, half-asleep, yawning, and sat down stretching her arms.

That was an easy task, but to get the cook to rise was rather a

¹ *A pierna tendida*, as the Spaniards say.

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troublesome business. She was a *cordons bleu*, and therefore very grumpy; she scolded, growled, grumbled, roared, and snarled; nevertheless, she rose at last, and moved about her rather unwieldy body.

Meanwhile, Madame de Versy had put on a dressing-gown; her husband had dressed himself as well as he could; Justine spread on the bed a cloth, and brought the necessary things for this improvised meal.

Everything being thus got ready, the pullet was brought in, instantly cut up, and eaten without mercy.

After this M. and Madame de Versy divided between them a St. Germain large pear, and ate a little orange-marmalade.

In the intervals they emptied a whole bottle of Grave wine, and repeated a great many times, with variations, that they had never eaten a more agreeable repast.

This meal came, however, to an end, for everything in this world must come to an end; Justine took away the knives, forks, and all the other things, and went to bed again, whilst the curtain of the conjugal couch closed on the couple.

Next morning, Madame de Versy hastened to her friend, Madame de Frauval, and told her what had happened; and it is due to the indiscretion of this latter lady that it has become public.

She also remarked that in finishing her story, Madame de Versy coughed twice and blushed.

XII

THE PHEASANT

The pheasant is a mystery of which the key is only revealed to the initiated; they alone can taste the bird in all its perfection.

Each substance has its highest point of esculence; some arrive at it before their entire development, as capers, asparagus, grey partridges, green pigeons, etc.; others arrive at it the moment when they are as perfect as they ever can be, such as melons, nearly all fruits, mutton, beef, venison, red partridges; others, finally, when they begin to decompose, as medlars, the woodcock, and especially pheasants.

This last-mentioned bird, when it is eaten within three days after it has been killed, is not so delicate as a pullet, nor so sapid as a quail.

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When eaten at the right time its flesh is tender, sublime, gamy, and tastes of chicken and of venison.

The right time is when the pheasant begins to decompose; then its aroma is developed, and combines with an oil, which to become developed requires a slight degree of fermentation, just as the essential oil of coffee is only obtained by roasting the bean.

This right moment reveals itself to the senses of the uninitiated by a slight odour, and by a change in the colour of the belly of the bird; but the born *gourmand* divines it by a sort of instinct which shows itself on many occasions, so that, for example, a first-class cook can tell in an instant whether a fowl should be taken from the spit, or be allowed to take a few turns more.

When a pheasant has arrived at this stage it ought to be plucked, but not before, and larded carefully with the freshest and firmest lard.

It is not a matter of indifference to pluck a pheasant too early; very careful experiments have taught us that those kept in their feathers are more highly perfumed than those plucked some time ago, either because the contact of the air has neutralised some part of the aroma, or that a part of the juice for nourishing the feathers is absorbed again, and serves to give more flavour to the meat.

The bird being thus prepared, it must be stuffed, and this is done in the following manner: Take out the bones of two woodcocks, put their meat aside, and keep the trails and livers of the two birds separate.

Take this meat and mince it, add some beef marrow steamed, a little scraped bacon, pepper, salt, herbs, and enough good truffles to stuff the inner cavity of the pheasant.

Be careful not to let the stuffing spread to the outside, which is sometimes a little difficult when the bird is rather high. Nevertheless, it can be done in various ways, and amongst others by fastening a crust of bread with a piece of thread on the stomach, which prevents its bursting. Cut a slice of bread longer and wider by two inches than the whole pheasant is; then take the livers and trail of the woodcocks, and pound them with two large truffles, one anchovy, a little scraped bacon, and a goodly lump of the best fresh butter.

Spread this paste on the slice of bread, and put it under the pheasant stuffed as above, so that it may receive all the gravy dripping from it while roasting.

When the pheasant is cooked, serve it up lying gracefully on

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its toast, put some bitter oranges round it, and await the result without any uneasiness.

This high-flavoured dish ought to be washed down, in preference, with some of the best wine of Upper Burgundy. I have discovered this truth after many observations, which have cost me more trouble than a whole table of logarithms.

A pheasant prepared in this manner is worthy of being served up to angels, if these were still travelling on this earth, as they did in the days of Lot.

What do I say? Such an experiment has been tried. A pheasant has been stuffed and cooked whilst I was present, by the worthy *chef* Picard, in the castle of La Grange, belonging to my charming friend Madame de Ville-Plaine,¹ and brought to table by the Major domo Louis, marching as if he were marching in a procession. It was examined with as much care as if it had been a new bonnet made by Madame Herbault,² and was tasted with great attention. Whilst this scientific labour was going on, the eyes of the ladies sparkled like stars, their lips were as glossy as coral, and their countenance became ecstatic. (See the "Gastronomic Tests," Meditation XIII.)

I have done more; I had a pheasant cooked in the same manner, and served up to a committee of magistrates of the supreme court, who know that the senatorial toga must sometimes be laid aside, and to whom I proved without any difficulty that good cheer is a natural compensation for the fatigues of study. After a careful examination, the eldest declared, with a grave voice, that the bird was excellent in taste; everybody present bent his head in token of acquiescence, and the sentence was unanimously confirmed.

I observed whilst the deliberation lasted that the noses of those venerable men were agitated by very strong movements of inhalation, that their august brows shone with peaceful serenity, and that their truthful mouths looked somewhat jubilant and almost smiling.

Moreover, those marvellous effects are in the nature of things. Treated according to the preceding prescription, The pheasant, already distinguished itself, is permeated from its outside with the savoury fat of the bacon which is browned; and in its inside it is impregnated with the odoriferous gases from the woodcocks and the truffle. The toast, already so richly prepared, receives again the gravies of the triple combination which flow from the bird whilst roasting.

¹ This lady has already been mentioned in Meditation VI, § vii, 43, p. 72. — Tr.

² The fashionable milliner in l'aris at the time our author wrote. — Tr.

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Thus, of the combination of all these good things, not an atom is lost, and everything can be appreciated, so that, knowing the excellence of this dish, I think it worthy of the most august tables.

*Parve, nec invideo, sine me, liber, ibis in aulam.*¹

XIII

GASTRONOMICAL INDUSTRY OF THE ÉMIGRÉS

"Any woman in France, as I can tell,
Can always cook, be it ill or well."²

In a preceding chapter I have shown the immense advantages France has gained from *gourmandise* during the events of 1815.³ This general propensity has not been less useful to the *émigrés*, and those who had some talents for the culinary art derived precious assistance from it.

Whilst passing through Boston, in the United States, I taught the restaurant-keeper Julien⁴ to make a *fondue*, or eggs cooked with cheese.⁵ This dish, a novelty to the Americans, became so much the rage that he felt himself obliged, by way of thanks, to send me to New York the rump of one of those pretty little roebucks that are brought from Canada in winter, and which was declared exquisite by the chosen committee whom I convoked for this occasion.

Captain Collet gained also a good deal of money in New York in 1794 and 1795 by making ices and sherbets for the inhabitants of this commercial town.

The ladies, in particular, never tired of this pleasure, so new to them; nothing was more amusing than to see the funny faces they made whilst tasting, being especially astonished that those ices could be kept cold under a summer heat of ninety degrees.⁶

¹ "Go, without me, little book, to the court; I do not envy you."

This line is an alteration of the first line of Ovid's *Tristia*, where *urbem*, town, is used instead of *aulam*, court.

² "Toute Française, à ce que j'imagine,
Sait, bien ou mal, faire un peu de cuisine."

These lines are from the third act of *La Belle Arsène*, an opera, performed, in 1778, and of which the music was composed by Monsigny (1729-1817), who died at the age of eighty-eight. — Tr.

³ See Meditation XI, 87, pp. 128-130. — Tr.

⁴ Julien flourished about 1794; he was a clever young fellow, who, it was reported, had been cook to the Archbishop of Bordeaux. He ought to have made a large fortune if he did not die early in life.

⁵ See Meditation XIV, "A Sketch," p. 166; and also in the Varieties, XVI, p. 367, the receipt for making this *fondue*. — Tr.

⁶ Ice was then a novelty in the United States; now there is more ice consumed, I suppose, than in the whole of Europe. — Tr.

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Passing through Cologne, I met with a gentleman from Brittany, who had done very well by keeping dining-rooms, and I might quote many other instances, but I prefer to tell the story of a Frenchman who made his fortune in London by his skill in mixing a salad.

If I recollect aright he was called d'Aubignac, or d'Albignac, and was a native of Limôges.

Although his way of living was not very luxurious, as his means were very small, he went one day to dine in one of the most famous taverns in London. He was one of those people who lay down the rule that one can always dine very well on a single dish, if it is only good.

While he was discussing a plate of juicy roast-beef, five or six young dandies of good family were enjoying themselves at a neighbouring table; and one of them rose, came to him, and said very politely, "Mr. Frenchman, it is said that your nation excels in the art of making a salad. Will you oblige us and mix one for us?"¹

D'Albignac consented after some hesitation, ordered all that he thought necessary to make the expected masterpiece, did his very best, and had the good luck to succeed.

While mixing the ingredients, he replied frankly to all questions about his position, told them that he was an *émigré*, and admitted, not without blushing a little, that he was receiving assistance from the English government — a circumstance which, without doubt, authorised one of the young men to slip into his hand a five-pound note, which was accepted after a little hesitation.

He had given them his address, and some time afterwards he was only slightly surprised on receiving a letter in which he was requested in the most courteous terms to go and make a salad in one of the finest houses in Grosvenor Square.

D'Albignac perceived that some double advantage might be obtained from this, so he did not hesitate a single moment, and arrived punctually, bringing with him a few fresh seasonings, which, as he thought, would give to his work a higher degree of perfection.

He had had time enough to consider what to do; and was again fortunate and succeeded. He received this time such a fee that he could not well have refused it without injuring himself.

The first young men for whom he had mixed a salad had, as we may presume, extolled and exaggerated its merits; and the second

¹ Our author puts in a footnote: This is a literal translation of the English compliment which was made on the occasion. — Tn.

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company made so much more noise about it that d'Albignac's reputation extended rapidly. He became known as the fashionable salad-maker, and in a country where all novelties are run after, the upper classes in the capital of the three kingdoms were all anxious to have a salad mixed by the French gentleman; if "I die for it," as they usually say in England.

"The longing of a nun consumes like fire,
Far fiercer still 's an English girl's desire."¹

Like a wise man d'Albignac took advantage of such an infatuation; he soon had a gig to go quicker to the various houses where he had an appointment, and a servant carrying a mahogany case containing all the ingredients which he now used; such as vinegar of different flavours, oils with or without a fruity taste, soy, caviar, truffles, anchovies, catchup, gravies, and even hard-boiled eggs, which are a distinct characteristic of the *mayonnaise*.

Later on he got such cases made, which he furnished completely, and sold by hundreds.

In short, by carrying on his operations, carefully and intelligently, he realised a fortune of more than eighty thousand francs, which he took back with him to France when the times had changed.

When back again in his native land, he did not amuse himself by making a show in the streets of Paris, but thought of the future, and placed sixty thousand francs in the public funds, which stood then at fifty, and bought for twenty thousand francs a little country-seat situated in the Limousin, where he still lives, for aught I know, contented and happy, as he knows to limit his wants.

Those details were told me some time ago by one of my friends who had known d'Albignac in London, and who had just met him when passing through Paris.

¹ These lines are slightly altered from Gresset (1709-77), poem *Ver-Vert*, chant II, and are in the original —

"Désir de fille est un feu qui dévore,
Désir de nonne est cent fois pis encore."

Our author has altered "fille" into "nonne," and "nonne" in the second line into "anglaise." — *Tr.*

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XIV

OTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EMIGRATION

THE WEAVER

In 1794, in Switzerland, M. Rostaing¹ and I were showing a serene face in spite of a contrary fortune, and preserving our love for our native country which persecuted us.

We came to Mondon, where some relatives of mine lived, and were received by the Trollet family with a kindness of which I have dearly kept the remembrance.

This family was one of the oldest in the country, but is now extinct, for the last member of it left only one daughter, who herself had no male descendant.

They showed me in this town a young French officer who had become a weaver; and this is how he became it:

This young man, of a very good family, passing through Mondon to join the army of Condé,² found himself at table beside an old man, who had one of those grave and animated faces with which painters depict the companions of William Tell.³

At dessert some conversation took place, when the officer did not conceal his position, and received various marks of interest from his neighbour, who expressed his sorrow that the young man was compelled to give up in his youth all he loved, and remarked that Rousseau was right when he laid down the maxim that every man should learn a trade, to keep him in times of adversity, and to nourish him everywhere. As for himself, he declared he was a weaver, a widower without children, and that he was content with his lot.

The conversation did not continue, and the next day the officer went away, and in a little time was in the ranks of the army of Condé. But from all that he saw there, both in that army and elsewhere, he came easily to the conclusion that this was not the way by which he could hope to return to France. Ere long he experi-

¹ M. le Baron de Rostaing, my relative and friend, now military superintendent at Lyons, is an administrator of the first order; and has in his portfolio a system of military accounts so clear that one day or other it is sure to be generally adopted.

² Louis-Joseph, Duke of Bourbon, Prince de Condé (1736-1818), emigrated during the first French Revolution (1792-1804), and became the chief of a corps of *émigrés*, known as the *armée de Condé*, and in the pay of Austria. — Tr.

³ William Tell, chief of the confederates of the forest-canton of Switzerland, had for his companions Walter Furst, his father-in-law, Stauffacher and Arnold von Melchtal. It is said, that, having refused to salute the Austrian Governor's cap, he was condemned to shoot an apple from the head of his own son, and succeeded in doing so. Switzerland shook off the Austrian yoke in 1307. — Tr.

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enced some of that unpleasantness which those men, who had no other claim than their zeal for the royal cause, not seldom met with there, and later on they did him some great injustice or something of that sort, which completely disgusted him.

The words of the weaver dwelt in his memory; he thought of them for some time, and, having made up his mind, he left the army, came back to Mondon, presented himself to the weaver, and asked him to receive him as an apprentice.

"I shall not let this opportunity escape me of doing a good action," said the old man; "you shall live with me; I only know one thing, and I will teach it you. I have only one bed, and you shall share it. You'll work for one year, and at the end of that time you shall establish yourself on your own account, and will live happy in a country where work is honoured and encouraged."

The very next day the officer set to work, and succeeded so well that at the end of six months his master told him that he had nothing more to teach him, that he considered himself repaid for the care he had bestowed on him, and that from henceforth all the profits of his work should be for himself.

When I passed through Mondon the new artisan had already gained enough money to buy a loom and a bed; he worked with wonderful assiduity, and the townspeople took such a lively interest in him that some of the first families in turns asked him to dinner every Sunday.

On that day he again donned his uniform, and resumed his rightful place in society; and as he was very agreeable and well informed, he was feasted and caressed by every one. But on Mondays he became again a weaver, and whilst passing his time in this alternative, he did not appear dissatisfied with his lot.

THE FAMISHING MAN

To this picture of the advantages of industry I shall add another of a certainly opposite kind.

I met at Lausanne an *émigré* from Lyons, a tall and handsome-looking fellow, who, in order not to do any work, only ate twice a week. He would have died of hunger in the most charming fashion; but a charitable merchant of the town told the keeper of an eating-house to let him have a dinner every Wednesday and Sunday in the week, and that he would pay for them.

The *émigré* arrived on the appointed days, stuffed himself till he could eat no more, and went away, not without taking with him a large lump of bread, for that was agreed on beforehand.

He managed as well as he could with this bread, drank water

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when his stomach hurt him, passed a part of his time in bed, half asleep and partly dreaming, which was not without charm, and thus waited till the next meal.

He had lived for three months in a similar way when I met him. He was not ill, but he showed in everything he did such languor, his features were so drawn, and between his nose and his ears there was something so Hippocratic, that it was painful to look at him.

I was surprised that he would rather suffer such agony than try to make himself useful, and I invited him to dine with me at my hotel, where he feasted in an appalling manner. But I did not ask him again, for I like people to bear up against adversity, and to do, if necessary, what the whole human race has to do, namely, to work.

THE SILVER LION

What first-rate dinners we *émigrés* used to have at that time at Lausanne in the Silver Lion!

For fifteen batzen, or about two shillings, we had three complete courses, including, among other things, good game from the neighbouring mountains, excellent fish from the lake of Geneva, all moistened with as much as we liked to drink of a cheap white wine, as clear as spring water, which would have made a madman drink.

At the head of the table sat always a canon of the church of Notre-Dame in Paris (I hope that he may still be alive), who was perfectly at home there, and before whom the waiter never failed to place every nice dish of the bill of fare.

He did me the honour of paying me particular attention, and of inviting me to draw near to him and to assist him; but I did not enjoy this advantage long, for I was led away by the force of circumstances, and I left for the United States, where I found refuge, occupation, and repose.

STAY IN AMERICA¹

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¹ I suppose our author means to indicate by those six lines of dots that he does not wish to say anything about his stay in America. Accidentally he has told us some of his adventures there in Meditation VI, 38, p. 57; Meditation XXI, 105, p. 227; Varieties, III, "A National Victory," p. 333; Varieties, XIII, "Gastronomical Industry of the *Émigrés*," p. 357; and in the following piece, "A Battle." — Tr.

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A BATTLE

I close this chapter with the narrative of an accident in my career, which clearly proves that nothing is certain in this world, and that misfortune may overtake us the very moment we least expect it.

I was going to France, and after three years' residence was leaving the United States, where I had found myself so comfortable that, though sorrowing for my departure, I asked Heaven, and it has listened to my prayers, to grant me the same happiness in the Old World I had enjoyed in the New.

I owe this happiness principally to the fact that when I first came among the Americans I spoke as they did,¹ dressed like them, took care not to appear more intelligent than they were, and approved everything that they did; thus rewarding the hospitality I found among them by a politeness I think necessary, and which I recommend to everybody who may ever find himself in a similar position.

I quitted, therefore, peacefully a country wherein I had lived in peace with every one, and there was not a featherless two-legged animal in all creation more full of love for his fellow-creatures than I was, when an accident occurred, wholly independent of my will, which might have caused me to become involved in a dire tragedy.

I was on the packet-boat going from New York to Philadelphia, and in order to make the voyage with safety and certainty, we had to wait for the precise moment when the tide was going out.

Now, the sea was neither ebbing nor flooding, so that it was time to start, but there was no appearance of the vessel leaving her moorings.

A goodly number of Frenchmen were on board, and among others a certain M. Gauthier, a decent man, who most probably is still in Paris, and who ruined himself in attempting to build *ultra vires* the house at the southwest corner of the residence of the French finance minister.

We were delayed on account of two American passengers who had not yet come on board, and for whom we were kindly waiting, which made us run the risk of being surprised by the low tide, and of taking twice as much time to arrive at our destination, for flood and tide wait for nobody.

¹ I dined one day at the same table with a Creole who had lived in New York for two years, and did not know enough English to ask for bread, so I expressed my astonishment. "Bah!" said he, shrugging his shoulders, "do you think I should be such a simpleton as to give myself the trouble of studying the language of such a disagreeable and glumpy people?"

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Hence a good deal of grumbling, and especially by the French, whose passions are much more easily roused than those of the inhabitants from the other side of the Atlantic. Not only did I take no part in it, but I scarcely paid any attention to it, for my heart was full, and I was thinking what Fate would have in store for me in France, so that I did not very well know what was going on. All at once I heard a terrific noise, and I saw that it was caused by Gauthier, who had given one of the Americans a box on the ear, powerful enough to have knocked down a rhinoceros.

This act of violence produced a frightful confusion. The words "French" and "American" having been several times bandied about, the quarrel became a national one, and it was proposed that all Frenchmen should be thrown overboard, which would have been a rather difficult business, as we were eight against eleven. From my outward appearance, I seemed the likeliest passenger to resist to the utmost this "transbordation";¹ for I am thickset, tall, and was then only thirty-nine. No doubt, for this reason, the ringleader of the hostile band was sent against me, and placed himself right opposite to me in a warlike attitude.

He was as high as a steeple, and stout in proportion; but, on taking his measure with a look which pierced to his very marrow, I saw that he was of a lymphatic temperament, with a puffy face, lack-lustre eyes, a small head, and weak legs.

Mens non agitat molem, I said to myself; let us see what he is made of, and if we must die, we must. So this is exactly what I said to him, after the manner of an Homeric hero: —

"Do you think you can bully me,² you infernal rogue! By Jove, it will not do, and I 'll throw you overboard like a dead cat. If I find you too heavy, I 'll cling to you with hands, legs, teeth, nails, everything; and if I cannot do better, we will sink together to the bottom. My life is nothing to send such a dog as you to the infernal regions. Come on!"³

Whilst saying these words, which harmonised, no doubt, with

¹ Another word invented by our author in imitation of the English word "transportation," which is *déportation* in French. — TA.

² Our author says in a footnote: "People never say 'thou' in English; and a carter, when plying his horse with the whip, says, 'Go on, sir! go on, sir, I say.'" What polite carters there were in England, and, I suppose, in America too, in M. Brillat-Savarin's time, and what a pity that all this is changed, but unfortunately not for the better. — TA.

³ The translator has taken the liberty of slightly altering a couple of the strongest and choicest English invectives, which our author uses, to prove his perfect knowledge of our language; some of his specimens of the vernacular have also been carelessly printed. M. Brillat-Savarin further states: "In all countries under English law a fight is always preceded by many words and a good deal of abuse, as they have a saying, 'High words break no bones.' Often also they do not go any further, and are careful not to strike a blow, for he who strikes the first blow breaks the public peace, and will always be condemned to pay a fine whatever the result of the fight may be."

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my attitude and action, I felt a strong as Hercules. My opponent seemed to shrink an inch in height; his arms fell, and his face became elongated. In a word, he gave such evident marks of funk, that one of his countrymen, who had no doubt sent him, saw it, and came to interpose. And he did right, for my blood was up, and the inhabitant of the New World would have felt that those who bathe in the Furens¹ have well-knit and sinewy frames.

Meanwhile words of peace had already been heard in another part of the ship; the arrival of the unpunctual passengers created a diversion; and it was necessary to set sail, so that, whilst I was still in a boxing attitude, the tumult suddenly ceased.

Things ended even better than I thought, for when everything was quiet, I went to look for Gauthier to scold him for his vivacity, and found him sitting at the same table with the man he had slapped in the face, in the presence of a most attractive-looking ham and an enormous jug of beer.

XV

A BUNDLE OF ASPARAGUS

Going through the Palais-Royal on a fine day in the month of February, I stopped before the shop of Madame Chevet, the most famous provision warehouse in Paris,² with whom always I had been somewhat of a favourite; and seeing a bundle of asparagus, of which the smallest stick was thicker than my forefinger, I asked her the price. "Forty francs, sir," she said. "They are certainly very fine; but at that price only a king or some prince could eat them." — "You are wrong; such choice objects never enter palaces, where they merely want what is fine, but not what is magnificent. For all that, my bundle of asparagus will soon be sold, and I'll tell you why:

"At this very moment there are in this town at least three hundred wealthy men, financiers, capitalists, contractors, and others, who must stay at home on account of gout, for fear of catching cold, by the doctor's orders, and from other causes which do not prevent them from eating; they sit by their fire, puzzling their brains to know what will please their palate; and when they are quite fatigued, and that without any result, they send their

¹ A clear stream that takes its rise above Roussillon, passes near Belley, and falls into the Rhone above Peyrieux. The trouts caught in it have pink-coloured flesh, while that of the pike is as white as ivory.

² We are happy to state that this shop still exists in the Palais-Royal, though I believe no longer kept by any member of the Chevet family. — Ta.

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valet on a voyage of discovery. He comes to my shop, notices those asparagus, makes his report, and they are bought at any price. Or, perhaps, a pretty, dainty-looking woman is passing with her lover, and says to him, 'Ah! my dear, look at those beautiful asparagus! Let us buy them; you know how well my servant makes the sauce.' Now, in such a case, a gentlemanly sort of lover never refuses to buy nor haggles. Or, again, it is for a wager, a christening, or a sudden rise in stocks. . . . How can I know the reason? In a word, the dearest objects are sold quicker than others, because in Paris so many extraordinary circumstances happen in men's lives that there are always sufficient motives to account for such objects being got rid of."

Whilst she was speaking, two big Englishmen, who were going along arm-in-arm, stopped before the shop, and their faces instantly expressed their admiration. One of them entered, told Madame Chevet to wrap up the wonderful bundle, without even asking the price; then he paid for it, put it under his arm, and carried it off whistling "God save the king."

"There, sir," said Madame Chevet, laughing, "there's another chance quite as common as the rest, though I had not yet mentioned it."

XVI

THE FONDUE

The *fondue* is of Swiss origin, and is only made of eggs lightly fried, with cheese in certain proportions, which time and experience have revealed. I will give here the right way how to prepare it.

It is a wholesome, savoury, and appetising dish, quickly got ready, and, therefore, always fit to be placed before any unexpected guest. Furthermore, I only mention it here for my own private delectation, and because the dish reminds me of an anecdote which the old men of the district of Belley still remember.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, a M. de Madot was appointed Bishop of Belley,¹ and arrived to take possession of his bishopric.

Those who had to receive him, and were doing to him the honours of his palace, had prepared a banquet worthy of the occasion, and used all the resources of the culinary art of that time to feast the arrival of the bishop.

¹ François Madot was Bishop of Belley from the month of April, 1705, until the month of December, 1711, and therefore officiated in the beginning of the eighteenth century. — Tb.

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Among the *entremets* was a simple *fondue*, of which the prelate helped himself copiously. But he made a mistake, by its appearance took it to be a cream, and surprised everybody by eating it with a spoon instead of using a fork, which from time immemorial served for such a purpose.

All the guests, astonished at this eccentricity, cast sidelong glances at one another, and smiled almost imperceptibly. Nevertheless, respect made every one hold his tongue, for it was clear that a bishop, who had just come from Paris, would do exactly what was right and proper at table, especially on the first day of his arrival.

But the report got bruited about, and the next day when one person met another they asked, "Well, do you know how our new bishop ate the *fondue* yesterday evening?" "Oh yes, I know all about it; he ate it with a spoon. I heard it from an eye-witness," and so on. From the town the report spread into the country, and in three months the whole diocese knew everything about it.

The most remarkable part of this incident was, that it nearly upset the belief of our forefathers; for some innovators took the part of the spoon, but they were very soon forgotten. The fork triumphed; and more than a century after the event, one of my great-uncles still made fun of it, and told me, laughing loudly and boisterously, how M. de Madot had once eaten *fondue* with a spoon.

RECEIPT FOR THE FONDUE

Taken from the papers of M. Trolliet, bailli of Mondon, in the canton of Berne

Take as many eggs as you wish to use, according to the number of your guests.

Then take a lump of good Gruyère cheese, weighing about a third of the eggs, and a lump of butter of about half the weight of the cheese.

Break and beat up the eggs well in a flat pan, then add the butter and the cheese, grated or cut in small pieces.

Place the pan on a clear fire, and stir with a wooden spoon till the mixture is tolerably thick and soft; put in a little or no salt, according to the age of the cheese, and a good deal of pepper, which is one of the special attributes of this ancient dish. Let it be placed on the table in a hot dish, and if some of the best wines be produced, and the bottle passed pretty freely, a marvellous effect will be beheld.

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XVII

DISAPPOINTMENT

All was quiet one day in the inn, the *Ecu de France*, at Bourg en Bresse, when a great noise of wheels was heard, and a splendid travelling-carriage, of English make, made its appearance, drawn by four horses; whilst especially deserving of notice were two very pretty-looking maids, who sat on the coachman's box, well wrapped up in scarlet rugs, with blue linings and embroideries.

At the sight of this carriage, which denoted an English lord travelling by easy stages, Chicot, as the innkeeper was called, ran to meet it, cap in hand; his wife stood at the door, the daughters nearly broke their necks in their hurry to come downstairs, and the stable-boys showed themselves, already counting on an ample gratuity.

The maids were unpacked, not without making them blush a little, considering the difficulties of the descent; and the travelling-carriage disgorged: 1. A stout Englishman, short, with a red face, and a tremendous "corporation." 2. Two young ladies, thin, pale, and red-haired. 3. A lady, looking as if she were between the first and second stages of consumption, and who said: "Mr. Innkeeper, look after the horses; let us have a room to rest awhile, and give some refreshments to my maids; but the whole must not cost more than six francs, so take your measures accordingly."

As soon as this not very large sum had been mentioned, Chicot put on his cap, the landlady went indoors, and the daughters returned to their rooms.

However, the horses were put into the stable, where they could read the newspapers, if they liked; the ladies were shown a room upstairs, and the maids got some glasses and a decanter of very pure water.

But the stipulated six francs were only received with a growl, and as a very slight compensation for the trouble caused and for expectations deceived.

XVIII

MARVELLOUS EFFECTS OF A CLASSICAL DINNER

"Alas, how I am to be pitied," exclaimed, in an elegiac tone, a gastronomer, who was a member of the Royal Court of Justice in

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the department of the Seine. "I thought I should soon return to my estate, and left my cook there; but business detains me in Paris, and I have to rely on the dishes prepared for me by an old woman whose cookery makes me sick. My wife is satisfied with anything, my children as yet understand nothing at all about it; the cooked meat is underdone, and the roast meat burnt. Alas! both the spit and the saucepan kill me!"

Whilst uttering these words he crossed with a sorrowful gait the place Dauphine in Paris. Happily for the public weal the professor heard these well-founded complaints, and recognised a friend in the grumbler. "You shall not die, my dear fellow," he said, in an affectionate tone to the martyred magistrate. "No, you shall not die of an evil for which I can offer you a remedy. Do me the honour and accept for to-morrow a classical dinner, in private committee; after dinner, a game of piquet, which shall be arranged in such a manner that everybody will amuse himself, and then this evening will drop, as other evenings have done, into the abyss of the past."

The invitation was accepted; the mystery was accomplished according to the usual customs, rites, and ceremonies; and since the 23d of June of the year 1825, for that was the day, the professor is happy to have preserved to the Royal Court one of its most worthy supporters.

XIX

EFFECTS AND DANGERS OF STRONG DRINKS

The artificial thirst which already we have mentioned,¹ and which requires strong drinks as a momentary solace, becomes in time so intense and so habitual that those who give themselves up to it cannot even go through the night without taking a drink, and have to leave their bed to quench their thirst.

This thirst then becomes a regular disease; and we may prophesy with certainty that when any one has gone so far he has not two years more to live.

Some time ago I travelled in Holland with a rich merchant of Dantzic, who for fifty years had been the head of the first retail-house in the trade for brandies.

"Sir," said this patriarch to me, "nobody in France even imagines how important the business is we continue, from father to son, for more than a century. I have studied carefully the work-

¹ See Meditation VIII, 49, "Different Varieties of Thirst," p. 109. —Ta.

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men who come to my place; and when they wholly give themselves up to their passion for strong drinks, but too common amongst the Germans, they all end very much in the same manner.

"At first they only take a little glass of brandy every morning, and for many years this satisfies them, for this habit is common enough among all workmen, and any one who does not take it would be laughed at by his companions; then they double the dose, that is to say, they take a little glass every morning and another towards noon. Thus things go on for about two or three years; then they begin to drink it regularly, every morning, noon, and night. Soon they take it at every hour of the day, and only like the brandy with a little cloves in it. When they have come to that state they will certainly, and at the most, not live six months; they are dried up, they get a fever, they go into the hospital, and are never seen again."

XX

CHEVALIERS AND ABBÉS

I have already twice referred to these two classes of *gourmands* now no longer in existence.¹

Inasmuch as they have disappeared for more than thirty years, the greater part of the present generation has never seen them.

They will probably reappear towards the end of this century: but as such an event requires the coincidence of many future contingencies, I imagine that very few persons, now alive, will ever witness this regeneration. Therefore, as a painter of manners, I give them a final touch of my brush, and, to do so the easier, borrow the following passage from an author who never refuses me anything:²

"Regularly and usually the title of chevalier should only have been given to persons decorated with an order, or to younger sons of the aristocracy; but many of those chevaliers found it convenient to create themselves, and, if the bearer had any education and a good figure, the carelessness of the time was such that no one took any notice of it.

"The chevaliers were generally handsome fellows; they wore their swords straight downwards, stretched out their leg, held their heads high, and their nose in the air. They were fond of gambling,

¹ See Meditation XII, 67, p. 149, and "Varieties," VIII, "The Plot," p. 343. — TR.

² This author is M. Brillat-Savarin himself, and the passage is borrowed from his *Essai historique sur le Duel*, published in 1819. — TR.

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libertines and roysterers, and essentially formed part of the retinue of a fashionable beauty.

"They were also distinguished by their brilliant courage, and by their great readiness to draw their swords. Sometimes they would call you out for merely looking at them."

Such was the end of the Chevalier S——, one of the most famous of his time.

He gratuitously sought a quarrel with a young man just arrived from Charolles, and they went to fight behind the Chaussée-d'Antin, where, at that time, there were nothing but marshes.

From the behaviour and attitude of the new comer, S—— soon saw that he had not to deal with a novice; but, nevertheless, he thought he would try his mettle, and at the first lunge he made, his opponent replied with so effective a thrust that the chevalier was dead before he fell to the ground. One of his friends, and his second in the duel, examined for a long time in silence a wound so terrible, and the direction the sword had taken, and said, finally, when going away, "What an elegant thrust in *carte!*" "What a good hand that young fellow is in fencing!" Those words were all the funeral oration the dead man got.

At the commencement of the wars of the Revolution, the greatest part of the chevaliers entered the ranks, others emigrated, the rest were lost among the crowd. The few who survive are still to be recognised by the way they hold their heads; but they are lean, and walk with difficulty: they have the gout.

When there were many children in an aristocratic family, one was always destined for the Church. He commenced by obtaining simple benefices, which defrayed the expenses of his education, and afterwards he became prince, commendatory *abbé*, or bishop, according as he felt more or less inclined for the apostolate.

This was the legitimate type of *abbés*, but there were imitation ones, and many young fellows who had some means, and did not like to run the risk of the title of chevalier, called themselves *abbés* when coming to Paris.

Nothing was easier; with a slight modification in the dress a professional appearance was at once obtained, then they looked the equals of every one in society, and were invited everywhere, caressed, run after, for there was no house without its *abbé*.

The *abbés* were short, thick-set, plump, well dressed, cajoling, very polite, inquisitive, *gourmands*, alert, insinuating; those who are still in existence have become corpulent and very pious.

There was no happier lot on this earth than that of a rich prior

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or commendatory *abbé*; they were of some importance, had money, no superiors, and nothing to do.

The chevaliers will reappear, if peace last for a long time, as we trust; but, unless there be a great change in the ecclesiastical administration, the race of *abbés* is lost for ever. "Sinécures" no longer exist, and people have reverted to the first principles of the Church, *beneficium propter officium*.

XXI

MISCELLANEA

"Mr. Counsellor,"¹ asked one day an old marchioness of the Faubourg Saint-Germain,² from one end of the table to the other, "which do you like best, Burgundy or Bordeaux?" "That, my lady," replied, in an oracular tone, the magistrate to whom this question was addressed, "is a trial in which I am so delighted to examine both sides, that I always adjourn for a week the pronouncing of the verdict."

At the table of a gentleman living in the Chaussée d'Antin was served up an Arles sausage of an enormous size. "Will you accept a slice?" the host asked a lady who was sitting next him; "you see it has come from the right factory." — "It is really very large," said the lady, casting on it a roguish glance; "what a pity it is unlike anything."

It is only intelligent men, especially, who hold *gourmandise* in honour; other men are incapable of an operation consisting of a series of appreciations and judgments.

The Countess of Genlis³ boasts in her Memoirs of having taught a German lady, who had been very attentive to her, the way to prepare as many as seven different delicious dishes.

It was the Count de Laplace⁴ who discovered a very elegant way of eating strawberries, namely, of squeezing over them the juice of a sweet orange, or apple of the Hesperides.⁵

¹ See M. Monselet's Introduction, p. viii.

² In this Faubourg used to live, and even live now, some of the most aristocratic families of France. — Tr.

³ Félicité Ducrest, Countess de Genlis (1746-1830), a well-known female author of numberless novels and other works, now completely and deservedly forgotten. — Tr.

⁴ See Meditation VI, p. 88. — Tr.

⁵ The Hesperides were three sisters who guarded the golden apples which Juno received

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Another scientific man has improved on the first by adding the rind of an orange, which he rubs off with a lump of sugar; and he pretends to prove by means of a scrap preserved from the flames which destroyed the library of Alexandria,¹ that strawberries were served up prepared in a similar way at the banquets of Mount Ida.²

"I have no very great opinion of that gentleman," said Count M——, speaking of a candidate who had just been appointed to a certain place; "he has never eaten a sausage *à la Richelieu*, and does not know mutton chops *à la Soubise*."

A man who was fond of wine was offered some grapes at dessert after dinner. "Much obliged," said he, pushing the plate aside; "I am not accustomed to take my wine in pills."

A connoisseur of gastronomy was congratulated on his appointment as director of indirect contributions at Perigueux: and, above all, in the pleasure there would be in living in the midst of good cheer, in the country of truffles, partridges, truffled turkeys, and so forth. "Alas!" replied with a sigh the sad gastronomer, "can one really live at all in a country where is no fresh sea-fish?"

XXII

A DAY WITH THE BERNARDINES

About the year 1782, and about one o'clock on a fine summer's night, we started, but not without having first given a rather loud serenade to the fair in whom we were happy enough to take an interest.

We left Belley to go to Saint-Sulpice, a Bernardine Abbey,³ on one of the highest mountains of the district, at least five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

I was then the leader of a troop of amateur musicians, all jolly good fellows, and all well provided with those virtues which accompany youth and health.

as a marriage gift; hence the place where those apples grow is sometimes called after them.
— Tr.

¹ The library of Alexandria, founded by the Ptolemies, is said to have been burned by order of the Caliph Omar in the year 641. — Tr.

² On Mount Ida, in Asia Minor, the gods, according to the Mythology, used to feast.
— Tr.

³ The Bernardine monks are so-called after St. Bernard (1091–1153), who reformed the order of the Cistercians, and became the first abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux. — Tr.

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"Sir," the Abbot of Saint-Sulpice said to me one day after dinner, whilst taking me in a corner by the window, "it would be a great kindness if you and your friends were to come and give us a little music on St. Bernard's day, for the saint will receive greater honour, our neighbours will be delighted, and you will have the honour of being the first Orpheuses¹ penetrating into these lofty regions."

I would not allow him to repeat his request, which promised an agreeable holiday; so I nodded my head affirmatively, and the room shook.

*Annuit, et totum nutu tremefecit Olympum.*²

All our precautions were taken beforehand, and we left early, because we had four leagues to go by roads capable of frightening even those audacious travellers who have climbed the heights of the lofty Butte Montmartre.³

The monastery was built in a valley closed to the west by the summit of the mountain, and on the east by a hill not quite so lofty.

The western peak was crowned by a forest of fir-trees so dense that during one storm on one day there were blown down thirty-seven thousand.⁴ The bottom of the valley was occupied by a vast meadow, intersected by bushes of beech-trees, which formed various irregular compartments, models on a large scale of those small English gardens which we like so much.

Arriving at daybreak, we were received by the father-cellarer, who had a quadrangular face and a nose like an obelisk.

"Welcome, gentlemen," said the good father, "welcome; our reverend abbot will be very pleased when he hears you have arrived. He is still in bed, for yesterday he was very much fatigued; but if you will come with me, you will see that you were expected."

After having uttered these words, he walked on, and we followed him, supposing correctly that he would lead us towards the refectory.

¹ Orpheus, a Thracian poet of such excellence that, when his wife Eurydice died, and went to the nether world, he so charmed King Pluto that she was released from death, on the condition that her husband would not look back till he had returned to earth; but he took one parting glance, before leaving Hades, and his wife vanished instantly, according to Greek mythology. — Tr.

² "He nodded, and made the whole of Olympus tremble with a nod"; a line from the *Æneid*. — Tr.

³ The Butte Montmartre is a small hill near Paris, somewhat like Notting Hill, Denmark Hill, or Primrose Hill in London. — Tr.

⁴ The administration of the streams and forests counted them and sold them, and commerce and the monks alike profited by it; a large capital was put into circulation, and nobody complained of the storm.

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There all our senses were delighted on beholding a most tempting breakfast, a really classical meal.

In the centre of a spacious table rose a pasty as large as a church, flanked on the north by a quarter of cold veal, on the south by an enormous ham, on the east by a monumental pile of butter, and on the west by an enormous dish of artichokes, with a hot sauce.

We saw, besides, various sorts of fruits, plates, napkins, knives, and silver spoons and forks in baskets, and at the end of the table, the lay brothers and servants ready to wait upon us, though astonished to find themselves up so early.

In one corner of the refectory we beheld a pile of more than a hundred bottles continually cooled by a natural fountain, which rippled out, murmuring *Evohe Bacche*.¹ And if the smell of the Mocha did not tickle our nostrils, it was because in those heroic times coffee was not yet taken so early.

The reverend cellarer enjoyed for a short time our astonishment, and then addressed to us the following allocution, which in our wisdom we thought had been prepared beforehand:

"Gentlemen, I should have been very glad to have kept you company, but I have not yet said my mass; and to-day is a double of the first class. I have no need to wish you a good appetite, for I imagine your age, the voyage, and the sharp air of our mountains will have given you one. Accept, therefore, with pleasure what we offer you with all our heart. I must leave you to sing my matins."

Whilst saying these words he disappeared.

Now was the moment for action, and we attacked with an energy which really seemed produced by the three aggravating circumstances so distinctly mentioned by the cellarer. But what could feeble children of Adam do against a repast seemingly prepared for the inhabitants of Sirius.² Our efforts were powerless, and, although fully crammed, we only left imperceptible traces of our passage.

Thus provided until dinner-time, we broke up; and I went to lie down in a good bed, where I slept whilst waiting for mass, like the hero of Rocroy,³ and other heroes who slept until the battle was to begin. I was woke up by a robust brother, who nearly tore my arm off, and I hastened to church, where I found everybody at his post.

¹ "Long live Bacchus," the cry of the priestesses of Bacchus at the festivals held in honour of this god, and distinguished for their licentiousness and debauchery.—Ta.

² The inhabitants of Sirius or the Dogstar were supposed to be great eaters.—Ta.

³ The battle of Rocroy in the Ardennes was fought against the Spaniards, May 19, 1643, and won by Condé, then Duke of Enghien.—Ta.

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At the offertory we performed a symphony, and sang a motet at the elevation, finishing with a quartett of wind instruments. And in spite of the jokes made about amateur music, truth obliges me to say that we did it very well.

I take this opportunity to remark that all such persons who are never pleased with anything are really always ignorant people, who only state their opinions boldly because they hope their audacity may lead others to believe they possess a knowledge they never had the courage to acquire.

We received with becoming modesty the praises lavished on us on this occasion, and after having received the thanks of the abbot, we sat down to dinner.

It was served in the style of the fifteenth century; there were few side-dishes, few superfluities; but an excellent choice of meats, simple and substantial stews, everything well cooked and perfectly roasted, and above all, vegetables of a flavour unknown in the marshy valleys, prevented us from wishing for anything we did not see.

As a sample of the abundance which reigned in this excellent monastery, I'll simply state that during the second course were served up fourteen different dishes of roast meat.

The dessert was so much the more remarkable as it was partly composed of fruits which do not grow on the mountains, and which had been brought from the Low Countries; for the gardens of Machuraz, la Morfient, Viu, Champagne, and other places favoured by the sun, the generator of heat, had been laid under contribution.

Liqueurs were not lacking; but the coffee especially deserves mention. It was as clear as crystal, aromatic, and wonderfully hot; but, above all, it was not handed round in those wretched vessels called cups on the left banks of the Seine, but in beautiful and capacious bowls, into which the thick lips of the reverend fathers plunged, engulfing the refreshing beverage with a noise that would have done honour to sperm-whales before a storm.

After dinner we went to vespers, and we performed, between the psalms, some antiphons which I had composed for this occasion. It was ordinary music, such as was sung at that time, and I neither praise nor blame it, for fear of being detained by modesty, or influenced by being the father of it.

The service for the day being thus ended, some of the neighbours began to go away, and others to form among themselves small card parties.

As for me, I liked walking better, and went with several of my

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friends to tread that soft and close turf worth all the carpets of the Savonnerie manufacture,¹ and to inhale that pure air which refreshes the mind and disposes the imagination to meditation and to romanticism.²

It was late when we entered again the monastery. The abbot came to me to wish me a good evening and a good night's rest; then he said: "I am going to my room, and let you finish the evening; not because I think that my presence would be irksome to the brethren, but I wish them to know they can have full liberty. It is not every day Saint Bernard's day. To-morrow everything will be as orderly as usual: *Cras iterabimus æquor*."

In fact, after the departure of the abbot the company became more gay and lively, and more of those jokes were told peculiar to monasteries, which do not mean much, and at which every one laughs without knowing why.

About nine o'clock supper was served, a supper carefully and delicately prepared, and several centuries in advance of the dinner.

We began to eat again; we chatted, laughed, sung some songs, and one of the fathers read us some verses he had made, which really were not so very bad for a shaveling.

Towards the close of the evening, some one called aloud, "Father cellarer, where is your dish?" — "Quite right," replied the father, "I am not cellarer for nothing."

He left the room for a moment, and came back soon, accompanied by three servants, one carrying a quantity of excellent buttered toast, and the other two laden with a table on which there was a bowl of burnt brandy and sugar, almost as good as punch, which was as yet unknown.

The new comers were received with acclamation; the toast was all eaten, the burnt brandy drunk, and as the Abbey clock struck midnight, each of us returned to his room to enjoy that delicious sleep to which the labours of the day had inclined and entitled him.

The father cellarer, mentioned in this really true narrative, became very old, and they spoke before him of a newly-appointed abbot from Paris, whose severity was dreaded. "My mind is quite easy about him," said the reverend father. "Let him be as terrible as he likes, he will never have the courage to drive away

¹ *La Savonnerie*, a government carpet-manufactory at Chaillot, became united in 1662 to the celebrated manufactory of the Gobelins still in existence. — Tr.

² I have constantly noticed this effect under the very same circumstances, and I am led to believe that the lightness of the air in the mountains allows certain powers of the brain to act which are depressed in the plains by heaviness.

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an old man from the corner of the hearth, nor take away the key of the cellar."

XXIII

HAPPINESS ON A JOURNEY

One day, mounted on my good horse, La Joie, I was riding over the pleasant slopes of the Jura.

It was in the worst days of the Revolution, and I was on my way to Dôle¹ to see the representative Prôt, and to obtain from him a safe conduct, which might prevent my being put into prison, and probably afterwards guillotined.

On arriving, about seven o'clock in the morning, at an inn in the little hamlet or village of Mont-sous-Vaudrey, I first of all looked after my horse's comfort, and then went into the kitchen, where a spectacle met my gaze which no traveller can behold without a feeling of pleasure.

Before a bright and brilliant fire a spit was turning, admirably furnished with various kinds of quails, and those little corn-crakes with green feet that are always so fat. That choice game was dropping its gravy on an enormous piece of toast evidently prepared by a sportsman; and close by I saw already roasted one of those very plump leverets, unknown to Parisians, the perfume of which would fill a whole church.

"That's all right," I said to myself, cheered at the sight. "Providence does not altogether abandon me. Let us pluck this flower as we go along, for there will always be time enough left to die in."

Whilst I had been looking round the kitchen, the landlord, whistling, and his hands behind his back, was walking his gigantic size to and fro. I said to him, "My dear fellow, what good thing are you going to give me for my dinner?" "Nothing but good things, sir; good boiled beef, good potato soup, a good shoulder of mutton, and good haricots."

At this unlooked-for reply a shiver of disappointment went through my whole system. Everybody knows that I never eat boiled beef, because it is the meat without the gravy. Potatoes and haricots generate fat,² and I have not got teeth of iron to tear asunder a shoulder of mutton. That bill of fare must have been prepared especially to annoy me, and I felt again overwhelmed by my misfortunes.

¹ One of the oldest towns of the Department of the Jura, which is bordering on that of the Ain, where our author was born. — Tr.

² The author this time creates the barbarous word *obésigène*. — Tr.

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The landlord cast on me a sly glance, and seemed to guess why I looked so disappointed. "For whom are you keeping all that nice game?" I asked with a dissatisfied air. "Alas! sir," he replied, in a sympathetic tone, "I cannot dispose of it; it all belongs to some gentlemen of the law, who have been engaged ten days as legal experts for a very rich lady. They finished their business yesterday, and are having a treat to celebrate so happy an event." — "Sir," I said, after having thought for a few minutes, "be kind enough to tell those gentlemen that a decent person asks the favour of being allowed to dine with them, that he will pay his share of the bill, and be very much obliged to them." He went away, but did not come back.

Soon after, a little man, corpulent, ruddy, chubby, thick-set, and sprightly, came in, and roamed about the kitchen, displaced certain articles, lifted the cover of a stewpan, and vanished.

"Good," I said to myself; "that is the brother tyler who comes to look at me." And hope revived again, for I knew, from experience, that I am not repulsive looking.

My heart, nevertheless, was beating like a candidate's at the end of a scrutiny of the ballot, when the landlord came to tell me that those gentlemen were highly flattered by my proposal, and only waited for me to sit down to dinner.

I went away jauntily, received the most flattering welcome, and after a few minutes felt like one of them. What a splendid dinner we had! I do not give the details, but I ought to make honourable mention of an elaborate fricassée of chicken, such as is only to be found in the country, and so richly dowered with truffles that there would have been enough to renew the vigour of old Tithonus.¹

We know already what the roast was; it tasted as well as it looked, and was done to a turn; and the difficulty I had had in getting at it made me appreciate the task the better.

The dessert consisted of a vanilla cream, some choice cheese, and excellent fruit; and we washed it all down first with a light reddish-coloured wine, then with Hermitage, and afterwards with some luscious and generous straw-coloured wine. The whole was crowned by some very good coffee, prepared by the sprightly tyler, who was also polite enough to provide us with certain liqueurs of Verdun, which he took out of a sort of tabernacle, of which he had the key.

The dinner was not only very good, but it was very merry.

¹ Tithonus, the son of Laomedon, King of Troy, was so handsome that Aurora fell in love with him; Jupiter made him immortal at her request, but as she forgot also to ask for eternal youth for him, he became decrepit and ugly, and Aurora changed him into a grasshopper. — Tn.

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After having discussed passing events with some circumspection, those gentlemen began cracking jokes with one another, which told me part of their biography; they hardly mentioned the business that had brought them together, but some good stories were told, and some songs were sung. I gave them a few couplets that had never been published, and I actually composed an impromptu, which was, of course, much applauded. Here it is: —

AIR OF THE *Maréchal ferrant*

How sweet, as through the world we pass,
To find good folk who love their glass!
Ah! 't is a blessing, I declare.
Surrounded by such men as these,
In life's warm inn I take my ease,
And pass without a single care
My time; and stay
An hour, a day,
Four days, a week, a month, a year,
And think me blest for such good cheer.

If I give here this couplet, it is not because I think it is excellent. Thank Heaven I have written better ones, and I could have improved that one if I liked, but I preferred to leave it as an impromptu, so that the reader will admit that any man who, with a Revolutionary Committee dogging his steps, could thus amuse himself, undoubtedly possessed the head and heart of a Frenchman.

We had already been four hours at dinner, and we were beginning to consider how we could best finish the evening; it was suggested that we should take a long walk to aid digestion, and that after that we should play a game of cards whilst waiting for supper, which would be of a dish of trout kept in reserve, and the remains of the dinner still very presentable.

I was obliged to refuse all these proposals; the going down of the sun on the horizon warned me that it was time to leave, but those gentlemen insisted, as politely as possible, on my remaining with them, and only gave way when I assured them that I was not altogether travelling for my own pleasure.

It may easily be imagined that they would not allow me to pay my share; and then, without asking me any troublesome questions, they all accompanied me to the door to see me start, and we bade each other farewell in a most affectionate manner.

Should any one of those who received me so well still live, and should this record fall into their hands, I would have them to

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know that after more than thirty years I write these words with the most heartfelt gratitude.

Luck never comes single, and my voyage had a success I had almost not expected.

I found on reaching Dôle the representative Prôt strongly prejudiced against me; he looked at me ominously, and I thought that I was going to be arrested; but I got off only with the fear, and after some explanation, it appeared to me that his features softened somewhat.

I am not one of those persons who are rendered cruel by fear, and I think that M. Prôt was not exactly a bad man; but he was not very intelligent, and did not know how to employ the formidable power put in his hands; he was like a child armed with the club of Hercules.

M. Amondru, whose name I have much pleasure in mentioning, had really some considerable difficulty in getting him to accept an invitation to supper where I should meet him. However he came, and received me in a far from satisfactory manner.

I was a little better received by Madame Prôt, to whom I went to pay my respects; for the circumstances under which I presented myself interested at least her feelings of curiosity.

The first words she said were to ask me if I loved music. What an unexpected happiness! She was passionately fond of it, and as I am myself a very fair musician, our hearts beat in unison from that very moment.

We talked before supper, and we discussed everything deeply. She spoke to me of treatises on musical composition, I knew them all; she spoke to me of the most fashionable operas, I had them by heart; she named the best-known authors, I had seen most of them. She went on talking, not having for a long time met any one with whom she could converse on such a subject, but she talked as an amateur, though I heard afterwards she had been a singing mistress.

After supper, she sent for some of her music-books. She sang, I sang, we sang. I never used my voice to greater advantage, and I never enjoyed it more. M. Prôt had already several times said he was going, but she took no notice of it, and we were giving in grand style the duet from the opera *La Fausse Magie*,¹

“Vous souvient-il de cette fête ?”

when he told her he really must insist upon her leaving.

¹ *La Fausse Magie*, an opera in two acts by Grétry (1741-1813), first performed in Paris in 1775. — Tr.

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We had to finish; but at the moment of parting, Madame Prôt said to me, "Citizen, a man who cultivates the fine arts as you have done, does not betray his country. I know you have asked some favour from my husband; it shall be granted; it is I who promise you."

On hearing these words, so consoling to me, I kissed her hand as warmly as I could; and the next morning I received my safe-conduct, duly signed, and magnificently sealed.

Thus the object of my journey was accomplished. I returned home with head erect; and, thanks to Harmony, charming daughter of Heaven, my ascension was for a good many years postponed.

XXIV

POETRY

My lord, if what Cratinus says be right,
Those verses cannot live, those lines delight,
Which water-drinkers pen: in vain they write.
For e'er since Bacchus did on wild design,
With Fauns and Satyrs half-mad poets join,
The Muses every morning, smelt of wine.
From Homer's praise his love of wine appears,
And Ennius never dared to write of wars,
Till heated well; let sober dotards choose
The plodding law but never tempt a muse;
This law once made, the poets straight begin,
They drink all night, all day they smelt of wine.

— HORACE, trans. by Creech, Epistle i. 19.

If I had had time enough, I should have made a careful selection of Gastronomical poetry, from the days of the Greeks and Latins to our own time, and I would have arranged it in historical epochs, to show the intimate connection which has always existed between the arts of speaking well and of eating well.

What I have not done, another will do.¹ We shall then see how the table has always controlled the lyre, and we will have an additional proof of the influence of physics on morals.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, poetry of such a kind was especially intended to glorify Bacchus and his gifts, be-

¹ This, if I am not mistaken, is the third work I leave to my fellow-workmen in the fields of Gastronomy to write: 1. A Monograph on Corpulence; 2. Theoretical and Practical Treatise of Halts of a Shooting Party; 3. A Chronological Collection of Gastronomical Poetry.

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cause to drink wine and to drink much was the highest degree of taste any one could obtain at that time. Nevertheless, to break the monotony, and to enlarge the poetic arena, Love was associated with Bacchus, an association which undoubtedly did not always benefit Love.

The discovery of the New World, and the acquisitions following it, brought about a new order of things.

Sugar, coffee, tea, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, and all their combinations, have made of good cheer a more composite whole of which wine is only a more or less necessary accessory, for tea can very well replace wine at breakfast.¹

Thus a more vast career is open to the poets of our days; they sing of the pleasures of the table, without being obliged to drown themselves in casks of wine; and charming pieces of poetry celebrate already the new treasures by which gastronomy is enriched.

I have looked through those poetical gatherings as any other man would do, and I have enjoyed the perfume of those ethereal offerings; but whilst admiring the resources of talent, and luxuriating in the harmony of the verses, I felt a greater satisfaction than any other man can feel, as all those authors agree with my favourite system, for most of these pretty things have been written to get a dinner, when dining or after dinner.

I trust that expert workmen will labour in that portion of my domain I give up to them; and I shall satisfy myself for the nonce by presenting to my readers a small number of choice poetic pieces, selected because I like them, and accompanied by very short notes, so that nobody will have to rack his brain by trying to find out the reason of my selection.

SONG

OF DEMOCHARES AT THE BANQUET OF DINIAS

This song is taken from the "Voyage of the Young Anacharsis,"² and this statement will be sufficient for my readers: —

"Let us drink, and sing of Bacchus!

He delights in our dances, he delights in our songs; he silences envy, hatred, and sorrow. He gave birth to the seductive Graces, to enchanting Loves: —

Let us love and drink, and sing of Bacchus!

¹ The English and Dutch breakfast on bread, butter, fish, ham, and eggs, and scarcely drink anything else but tea.

² The imaginary travels in Greece of Anacharsis, a young Scythian, written by the abbé, Jean-Jacques Barthélemy (1716-95). — Ta.

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The future does not yet exist, the present soon will be no more;
the moment of our enjoyment is the only moment we live:—

“Let us love and drink, and sing of Bacchus!”

Wise through our follies, rich through our pleasures, let us
trample under foot the world and its vain greatness, and in the
soft intoxication that such happy moments bring into our souls:—

“Let us drink, and sing of Bacchus!”

This one is by Motin,¹ who, it is said, was the first poet in
France who wrote drinking songs; it breathes the true spirit of
intoxication, and does not lack nerve:—

I like, I own, a public-house,
For there I care for none a louse!
What place is like the place I prize?
Where I have all which makes life dear,
Where common wipers in my eyes,
The finest Holland web appear.

When summer heats my world invade,
And I can find no whispering shade,
How fresh its parlour seems and cool,
Its flaming fagots can afford,
To me more joys in time of yule,
Than all the forests of my Lord.

I find there all I hope to dream.
Its very thistles roses seem,
And juicy ortolans its tripes,
Except in drink no rivalry
It knows. My public, with its swipes
And cards, is Paradise to me.

'Tis Bacchus, whom we follow there,
The nectar which he bids us share
Has something in it of divine;
For man is man, so say the wise,
Not angel if he drink no wine,
But he who drinks it haunts the skies.

The laughing jolly wine I ween
Can banish all my gloom and spleen,

¹ Very little is known of Pierre Motin, who flourished in the sixteenth century, and died about 1615. Nearly all his poems, which have never been published in a volume, are to be found in the collections of that time. Boileau sneers at Motin's poems in the fourth song of his *Art Poétique*, and says that they freeze and chill their readers; we think, on the contrary, they are rather “warm.” — TB.

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It smiles, and all my spirit wakes,
We love each other in like sort
I take it, me it overtakes,
And sport with what of me makes sport.

I'm merry when I've had enough,
My ears buzz more than quantum suff.,
I stumble when I would advance:
I every quart and pint-pot greet,
And cut, though I could never dance,
My capers in the muddy street.

My prayer is till I be dead,
May the good white wine and the red,
To quit my body be full loath;
The while they rest in amity,
For I shall soon eject them both,
Unless they can like friends agree.

The following piece is by Racan,¹ one of our ancient poets; it is full of charm and philosophy; has served as a model for many others, and appears to be younger than its baptismal certificate:—

TO MAYNARD²

Why take such trouble, toil, and pain,
Oh let us drink and drink again
Of these delicious wines, which vie
With nectar, or perhaps exceed
In flavour those which Ganymede
Pours in the cup of Gods on high.

'T is drink, which makes the years go by,
And swifter than our short days fly;
'T is drink which makes us young again,
Which banishes from our sad heart
All past regret, all sorrows smart,
All present toil, all future pain.

Then drink, Maynard, and fill your glass,
Insensibly the swift hours pass
And lead us softly to our urn.
What prayer may avail? what tears
For us, or will our vanished years,
Till rivers backward flow, return?

¹ Honorat de Buëil, Marquis de Racan (1589-1670), a pupil of Malherbe, is chiefly known by his pastoral *Les Bergeries*; he also wrote some religious poetry. — Ta.

² François Maynard (1582-1646), a lawyer, was another poetical pupil of Malherbe. — Ta.

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The spring, so quaintly clad in green,
Soon puts to flight the cold I ween,
And calmly ebbs and flows the main;
But when our youth is gone and hour,
Old age contracts our limbs no more,
Will Time bring back our youth again?

The iron laws of death allot
One fate to palace and to cot,
Old reed-thatched huts lie side by side
With ruined fanes. The Fates enthrall
Both poor and king. The threads of all
One pair of scissors must divide.

Those hands which all the world deface
Will ravish in but little space,
The very best established whole
On earth. Then drink, my friend, with me,
Before we reach that sluggish sea,
Where Lethe's waters roll and roll.

This next is by the professor himself, who has also set it to music. He shrinks from the inconvenience of having the music published, notwithstanding the pleasure he should have felt at hearing it played on all pianos; but, by an unforeseen stroke of good luck, it can be sung, and it will be sung, to the air of the "Vaudeville de Figaro" : —

THE CHOICE OF SCIENCES

Let us not pursue this glory,
For it sells its favours dear;
Let us banish ancient story,
'T is a web of crime and fear.
Let us till our heads be hoary
Drink the wine our sires held dear.
Ah! it smacks well, old and clear. (*bis.*)

Of the stars I leave the science,
In the skies I've lost my way,
There 's in chemic art reliance
None, but many debts to pay.
No! In cooks and their appliance
I will trust nor leave my tracks;
Well a dainty morsel smacks! (*bis.*)

Young, I read both morn and even,
White grew every raven hair,

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But the old Greek sages seven
Taught me nothing new or rare.
Now with sin my life I leaven,
To dear idleness I 'm wed.
Pleasant 't is to be abed. (*bis.*)

Medicine 's a practice which in
Great success gave me supply,
But the science I was rich in
Only helps a man to die.
I myself prefer the kitchen,
For an art-restoring need,
And a cook 's a man indeed. (*bis.*)

All such trades of rudeness smatter.
Therefore in my day's decline,
I to mix some gayer matter,
With my toil to love incline.
Spite of all old prudish chatter,
Love 's a very pretty game,
Let us play it all the same. (*bis.*)

I was present when the following couplet was composed by M. Boscary de Ville-Plaine¹ a distinguished amateur, and a cherished pupil of the professor, and that is the reason I give it here. Truffles are worshipped now, and perhaps the idolatry does us not much credit: —

IMPROMPTU

To the black truffle drink, for I
Hate the ungrateful worse than hell;
The herb which gives us victory,
In that short fight we love so well.
For the strange might
Of love's delight,
Our God Himself this good weed sent,
On making mortals blessed intent,
That we might use it day and night.

As a finale I give some verses which belong to Meditation XXVI.²

I tried to set them to music, but have not succeeded to my mind. Another may do better, especially if he is a little more animated.

¹ This gentleman seems the same as the one mentioned by our author as "an aspiring gastronomer and financier"; see Meditation XI, 57, p. 130, note. He was probably a relation of a lady of the same name mentioned in Meditation VI, § vii. p. 72.

² The Meditation XXVI, p. 257, is "On Death." — TR.

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The melody ought to be strong, and denote in the second couplet that the patient is getting worse.

THE AGONY

A Physiological Romance

I feel through all my senses life's sad end,
My dim eye sees the last few grains of sand
Falling, Louisa weeps, my tender friend,
And places on my breast her trembling hand.
The band of morning callers troops apace,
Not to return, they bid a last good-bye,
The doctor leaves, the pastor takes his place,
For I must die.

I fain would pray, my memory is gone;
I fain would speak, my lips can frame no sound;
I hear, though all is still, a singing tone,
And a dull shadow seems to hover round;
All is now cold and dark: my panting breast
Exhausts itself in heaving one poor sigh,
To wander round my mouth in frozen rest,
For I must die.

XXV

M. HENRION DE PANSEY¹

I honestly thought I was the first who ever in our days had conceived the idea of an Academy of Gastronomers; but I am afraid it has been anticipated, and this sometimes occurs. We can judge of it by the following fact, which happened nearly fifteen years ago.

The president, Henrion de Pansey, whose intelligent liveliness bids defiance to chilling old age, in speaking in 1812 to three of the most distinguished scientific men of the present time (MM. Laplace, Chaptal, and Berthollet),² said to them: "I look upon the discovery of a new dish which keeps up our appetite and prolongs our enjoyments as an event much more interesting than the discovery of a new star, for we see quite enough stars. Moreover, I shall not think science sufficiently honoured, nor adequately rep-

¹ Pierre-Paul Henrion de Pansey (1742-1829), a well-known French lawyer and President of the Court of Appeal. — Tn.

² For MM. Laplace and Chaptal see Meditation VI, pages 88 and 89. Claude-Louis Berthollet (1748-1822), a celebrated chemist who was also made a Count by Napoleon I. — Tn.

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resented, until I see a cook appointed a member of the scientific branch of the Institute." ¹

The dear president was always pleased when he thought of the object of my work; he wished to give me a motto for it, and maintained it was not the *Esprit des Lois* which had opened to M. de Montesquieu the doors of the Academy.² He also told me that Professor Berriat-Saint-Prix³ had written a novel, and he advised me to write the chapter on the Gastronomical industry of the *émigrés*. Therefore, as justice ought to be done to him, I composed the following four verses on him, which contain at the same time his history and his praise: —

VERSES

TO BE PLACED UNDERNEATH THE PORTRAIT OF
M. HENRION DE PANSEY

To labour among books was his delight,
And on the bench he showed a lofty mind,
Profound in law, a scholar, erudite,
To all forever courteous and kind.⁴

President Henrion de Pansey was appointed Minister of Justice in 1814, and the officials in this department have not yet forgotten the answer he gave them when they came in a body for the first time to present their respects to him.

"Gentlemen," he said to them in that paternal tone which suited so well his tall figure and great age, "probably I shall not remain long enough with you to do you any good, but at least you may be sure I shall not do you any harm."

¹ The French Institute was established in 1793, when all academies and literary societies endowed by the State were abolished; its members are the most eminent scientific and literary men of France and other countries. — Tr.

² Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755), author of the *Lettres Persanes*, *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur et de la Décadence des Romains*, *L'Esprit des Lois*, etc., owed his nomination as member of the Academy, in 1727, to his dinners, according to the ridiculous insinuation of the "dear president." — Tr.

³ Jacques Berriat-Saint-Prix (1769-1845), a well-known lawyer and literary man. See also the "Dialogue between the author and a friend," p. xxvi, note. — Tr.

⁴ We give the verses here in the original, as they were written by our author. — Tr.

Dans ses doctes travaux il fut infatigable;
Il eut de grands emplois, qu'il remplit dignement:
Et quoiqu' il fût profond, érudit, et savant,
Il ne se crut jamais dispensé d' être aimable.

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XXVI

ADDRESSES

My work is finished, and, nevertheless, to show that I am not out of breath, I am going to kill three birds with one stone.

I shall give to my readers in all countries some addresses of which they may take advantage; I shall give to the artists I have selected a remembrance of which they are worthy; and to the public a sample of the metal I am made of.

1. Madame Chevet keeps a provision warehouse, No. 220 Palais-Royal, near the Théâtre Français, where I am a regular customer, but not a very large buyer. Our connection began when she appeared on the gastronomical horizon, and she was kind enough to bewail my death, though this was happily only a mistake, based on the death of another gentleman very much like me.

Madame Chevet is the necessary intermediary between the purveyors of choice provisions and wealthy men. She owes her prosperity to the honesty of her commercial transactions; everything that is not quite fresh disappears from her shop as by enchantment. The nature of her business requires her to make a rather large profit; but when the price is once agreed on, one may be sure of having a first-rate article. This honesty is hereditary, and her daughters, who have scarcely reached the age of puberty, already follow the same principles.

Madame Chevet has agents in all countries to satisfy the wishes of even the most capricious gastronomers, and the more rival establishments have been established, the more popular she becomes.

2. M. Achard, a pastry-cook, 9 Rue de Grammont, born at Lyons, is established in Paris about ten years; he commenced his reputation by the biscuits and the vanilla gaufres which have been inimitable for a long time.

Everything in his shop is somewhat delicate and coquettish, such as can be rarely found elsewhere; the handiwork of man does not obtrude itself. His dainties seem the natural productions of some enchanted island; everything made in his place is sold the same day. We may say that for him there is no morrow.

In the dog-days, when it is fine weather, every moment some smart carriage stops in the Rue de Grammont, and usually a stylish young man¹ and a pretty girl with hat and feathers are in

¹ In the original *beau Titus*, because during the Directory (1795-99) it was the fashion for young men to have their hair cut short, except a few curls in front, in imitation of the bust of the Roman Emperor Titus. — Tr.

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it. The first runs into Achard's, and comes back with a large bag full of sweetmeats, which is received with an "Oh, my dear friend, how nice that looks!" or, perhaps, "Oh, dear! how well that looks; it makes already my mouth water." And then they start off again to the Bois de Boulogne.

The *gourmands* are so zealous and so kind that for a long while they have borne with the rude behaviour of a far from polite young lady who served in the shop. This inconvenience exists no longer; for behind the counter is now Miss Anna Achard, whose pretty little hand gives a new merit to the dainties which needs no commendation.

3. M. Limet, No. 79 Rue de Richelieu, my neighbour, and baker to several princes, with whom I have also dealt for some time.

He bought the business when it was doing nothing, but very soon raised it to a high degree of prosperity and reputation.

His household bread is very good, and it is difficult to unite in fancy breads such a whiteness, flavour, and lightness, as he does.

Foreigners, as well as people from the provinces, always find at M. Limet's the bread they are accustomed to; so the customers come themselves, crowd, and often have to wait till others are served.

This success will not surprise any one who is aware that M. Limet is no slave to custom, but labours assiduously to discover new resources, and that some of our greatest scientific men give him advice.¹

XXVII

PRIVATIONS

HISTORICAL ELEGY

Ye, the first parents of the human race, whose *gourmandise* is mentioned in history, you who ruined yourselves for an apple, what would you not have done for a truffled turkey? But in Paradise there were neither cooks nor confectioners.

How I pity you!

Ye mighty kings who conquered haughty Troy, your valour will be handed down from age to age; but your table was wretched.

¹ See about Madame Chevet, "Varieties," XV, "The Bundle of Asparagus," p. 365: about Achard, Meditation XI, 57, p. 130; and about Limet, Meditation XXI, 99, p. 217. —Tr.

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Reduced to a joint of beef and a chine of pork, you remained ignorant of the charms of a *matelote* and the delights of a *fricassée* of chicken.

How I pity you!

You, Aspasia, Chloe, and all you whose forms have been immortalised by the Grecian chisel to the despair of the belles of the present day, your charming mouth has never inhaled the sweetness of a *meringue à la vanille* or *à la rose*; your thoughts scarcely rose above gingerbread.

How I pity you!

You, gentle priestesses of Vesta, burdened at once with so many honours and threatened by such horrible punishments,¹ if only you had tasted those delightful syrups which refresh the mind, those preserved fruits which defy the seasons, those creams, of various flavours, the marvels of our time!

How I pity you!

You, Roman capitalists, who drained the whole known universe, in your renowned saloons you never beheld such succulent jellies, the delights of the indolent, nor those variegated ices, of which the cold braves the torrid zone.

How I pity you!

You, invincible Paladins, celebrated by talkative minstrels, after having cleft giants in twain, set free fair ladies, or exterminated armies, no black-eyed captive ever did offer you sparkling Champagne, Malmsey, or Madeira,² or liqueurs the creation of the age of Louis XIV. You had to be satisfied with beer or with some herb-flavoured sour wine.

How I pity you!

You, crossed and mitred abbots, who dispensed the favours of Heaven, and you terrible Templars, who wielded your swords to exterminate the Saracens, you knew nothing of the sweet, restoring influence of chocolate, nor of the thought-inspiring bean of Arabia.

How I pity you!

¹ They were condemned to be buried alive if they allowed the sacred fire in Vesta's Temple to become extinguished, or if they broke their vows of chastity. — Ta.

² I regret to say the illustrious author speaks of *Malvoisie de Madère*. Malmsey is a wine from Candia. — Ta.

VARIETIES

You, proud ladies of the manor, who felt so lonely in your castles during the Crusades, and raised your almoners and your pages to supreme rank, you never shared with them the charming biscuit and the delightful macaroon.

How I pity you!

And, finally, you, Gastronomers of the year 1825, who find satiety in the lap of abundance, and dream of some newly made dishes, you will not enjoy the discoveries which science has in store for the year 1900, such as foods drawn from the mineral kingdom, liqueurs produced by the pressure of a hundred atmospheres; you will never see the importations which travellers yet unborn will bring to you from that half of the globe which has still to be discovered or explored.

How I pity you!

ENVOY TO THE GASTRONOMERS OF BOTH WORLDS

Excellencies !

The work I present to you aims at developing to all the principles of that science of which you are alike the ornament and the support.

I begin also by offering up incense to Gastronomy, that young immortal being, who having hardly put the starry crown on her brow, rises already above her sisters, like Calypso,¹ "who surpassed by a head the charming group of nymphs by whom she was surrounded."

The immense porticoes of the temple of Gastronomy, that ornament of the metropolis of the world, will soon tower to Heaven; you will make it ring again with your voices, and will enrich it with your gifts; and when the Academy promised by the oracles shall be established on the inimitable bases of pleasure and of necessity, intelligent gourmands, agreeable guests, you all shall be members or correspondents.

In the meanwhile, lift up to Heaven your radiant faces; advance in all your force and majesty; the universe of foods is open before you.

Work, Excellencies; labour for the benefit of science; digest for your own particular interest; and if in the course of your labours you should happen to make any important discovery, be kind enough to communicate it to your most humble servant,

The Author of "Handbook of Gastronomy."

¹ An allusion to Calypso, queen on the island Ogygia, on which Ulysses was wrecked and detained for seven years, according to Fénelon's prose epic *Télémaque*, from which work the above lines are taken. — Ta.

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